



Tricking Out Those Parked Domains

A few cheap and easy beauty secrets can help you capture a bigger share of the Internet ad boom.

THE WEB OVERFLOWS WITH SITES FULL OF NOTHING more than links to advertisers. Howard Hoffman hopes you won't realize that's essentially what you've landed on when you come across one of his pages.

Hoffman has been buying up URLs for the past six years, amassing about 11,000. And like other so-called domainers, he has converted many of those names into profit producers by "parking" them with companies known as aggregators, which create heavily formatted sites filled with ad links served mainly by Google and Yahoo. When a Web surfer lands on a parked site by typing a name directly into a browser's address bar and then clicks on an ad, the domainer and the aggregator each collect a share of the revenue. The cost to the domainer: zip.

Aggregators, also known as parking companies, have proliferated with the spread of pay-per-click ads, making hordes of domainers wealthy. (See "Masters of Their Domains," December.) But many in the domain game worry that surfers increasingly recoil at static sites littered with ad links, and don't hang around long enough to execute any of those profit-generating clicks. Moreover, Google and Yahoo try to block ad-bloated sites from showing up in their algorithmic, or "pure," search results.

So, to improve his returns, Hoffman has moved some of his best domains to SmartName, a parking company based outside Philadelphia. SmartName is one of several aggregators that provide software tools to let owners dress up their sites by adding photos, logos, written content, and other camouflage—all at no charge. Says Ari Goldberger, who founded SmartName in 2003, "We want to make it so the initial reac-

tion isn't 'Oh, it's another one of those pages. I'm outta here.'"

Hoffman has in some cases tripled his revenue with modest tailoring of his sites on SmartName. Take LasVegasLingerie.com. Using one of SmartName's templates, Hoffman chose a photo, picked a grayish color he liked, and added categories—"sexy lingerie," "lingerie party"—that people can click on to find relevant advertisers.

"To the average person, it looks like a real website," Hoffman says. SmartName, which works exclusively with Yahoo, also helps site owners figure out the best words to include based on what people are searching for and what advertisers are paying. The owner can make changes at any time. LasVegasLingerie.com's traffic is still small—maybe 25 daily hits—but the site is making Hoffman as much as \$10 a day, or three times what it did before the SmartName makeover. Do this with scores of sites and the money adds up.

The services can even help domainers in the cat-and-mouse game they play with search engines. Parked pages with original content, even just several hundred words, sometimes do sneak into pure search results.

THE ANGLE: Gussying Up Ad-Heavy Websites to Generate More Clicks



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Contact SmartName by email at info@Smartname.com or phone 856-874-9651 for more information