

Survey Results: For-Profit Websites

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Aggregated data from 81 websites

1. How often is your site updated?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Multiple times daily		57	69%
2	Daily		15	18%
3	Multiple times weekly		9	11%
4	Weekly		2	2%
5	Monthly		0	0%
	Total		83	100%

2. Advertising Information Total advertising revenue (average monthly)?

#	Answer		Response	%
8	NONE		11	14%
1	\$1 - \$499		36	44%
2	\$500-\$999		4	5%
3	\$1,000 - \$1,999		9	11%
4	\$2,000 - \$4,999		9	11%
5	\$5,000 - \$9,999		5	6%
6	\$10,000 - \$14,999		2	2%
7	\$15,000 or more		5	6%
	Total		81	100%

3. Breakdown of Advertising Ad banner/display revenue (average monthly)?

#	Answer	Response	%
8	NONE	9	12%
1	\$1 - \$499	35	46%
2	\$500-\$999	6	8%
3	\$1,000 - \$1,999	9	12%
4	\$2,000 - \$4,999	6	8%
5	\$5,000 - \$9,999	4	5%
6	\$10,000 - \$14,999	3	4%
7	\$15,000 or more	4	5%
	Total	76	100%

4. What types of ads do you sell?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Time-based (e.g. weekly, monthly)	50	66%
2	Sponsorship	33	43%
4	CPM-based	34	45%
3	Other	23	30%

Other

Amazon Associates

I'm part of two blog networks, BlogHer & Boston Blogs Ad Network. I'm looking for individual sponsors, but it has not worked out.

email newsletter, RSS feed, mobile

blogvertorial, eNewsletter, contest/event sponsorship

CPC based

text links

You would have to talk to Tien Mao at Gothamist for this information.

Email, iPhone

Free PR/Ads for non profits

We utilize a local business directory and in-house web design to fund our hyperlocal site.

newsletter promotions, contests

We've started playing with Google ads after realizing our ad department won't sell online ads

video

Barter

video, pre-roll

Sponsored posts

Special real estate package

advertorial blogs; radio/TV spots in conjunction with our media partners (i.e. package opportunities)

5. What is your average CPM?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Less than \$1.00	10	30%
2	\$1.00-\$2.49	9	27%
3	\$2.50 - \$4.99	5	15%
4	\$5.00 - \$7.49	3	9%
5	\$7.50 or more	6	18%
	Total	33	100%

6. Which ad network do you use?

#	Answer	Response	%
4	I don't use an ad network	33	40%
1	Google	40	49%
2	Yahoo	1	1%
3	Other	19	23%

Other

Instivate

Adify, Tribal Fusion

Yardbarker
Flyerboard and Boston Blogs Network
BlogHer, Boston Blogs Ad Network
Commission Junction
yardbarker
ADSDAQ, Direct Media
Lycos, othe partners
unknown
ADSDAQ
Adsdaq, Technorati Engage
rvanews.com
Amazon, Adbrite
Glam
self
Media General's National Online Ad sales team
Burst Media, PaperG
DoubleClick

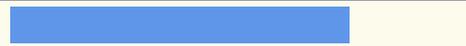
7. Google AdSense revenue (average monthly)?

#	Answer	Response	%
8	NONE	18	30%
1	\$1 - \$499	40	67%
2	\$500-\$999	1	2%
3	\$1,000 - \$1,999	0	0%
4	\$2,000 - \$4,999	0	0%
5	\$5,000 - \$9,999	1	2%
6	\$10,000 - \$14,999	0	0%
7	\$15,000 or more	0	0%
	Total	60	100%

8. Other ad network revenue (average monthly)?

#	Answer		Response	%
8	NONE		31	54%
1	\$1 - \$499		20	35%
2	\$500-\$999		1	2%
3	\$1,000 - \$1,999		3	5%
4	\$2,000 - \$4,999		1	2%
5	\$5,000 - \$9,999		0	0%
6	\$10,000 - \$14,999		0	0%
7	\$15,000 or more		1	2%
	Total		57	100%

9. Additional text ad revenue (average monthly)?

#	Answer		Response	%
8	NONE		38	76%
1	\$1 - \$499		9	18%
2	\$500-\$999		1	2%
3	\$1,000 - \$1,999		1	2%
4	\$2,000 - \$4,999		0	0%
5	\$5,000 - \$9,999		0	0%
6	\$10,000 - \$14,999		0	0%
7	\$15,000 or more		1	2%
	Total		50	100%

10. Directory ad revenue (average monthly)

#	Answer	Response	%
8	NONE	41	84%
1	\$1 - \$499	5	10%
2	\$500-\$999	0	0%
3	\$1,000 - \$1,999	1	2%
4	\$2,000 - \$4,999	1	2%
5	\$5,000 - \$9,999	1	2%
6	\$10,000 - \$14,999	0	0%
7	\$15,000 or more	0	0%
	Total	49	100%

11. Additional Revenue?

#	Answer	Response	%
8	NONE	27	54%
1	\$1 - \$499	12	24%
2	\$500-\$999	3	6%
3	\$1,000 - \$1,999	3	6%
4	\$2,000 - \$4,999	3	6%
5	\$5,000 - \$9,999	1	2%
6	\$10,000 - \$14,999	0	0%
7	\$15,000 or more	1	2%
	Total	50	100%

12. Please describe the source of additional revenue

Text Response

We produce and promote events. We have relationships with a number of Brooklyn businesses including bars and restaurants where we both promote their events and produce our own there. The partnerships/revenues from this ranges from door splits after expenses to flat fees for promotion only.

Subscriptions from newspapers and television stations that syndicate our blog

aggregation service
Yardbarker, Adify, Blogads
Gifts/donations
I recently started doing paid reviews with BlogHer.
custom publishing, community events site construction, online consulting, design services
t-shirt sales, ticket affiliates
advertising design, website design, photography, logo T-shirt/merchandise sales
T-Shirts
I sell advertising directly to local businesses
Partnership revenue - ie. beyond.com
job boards, coupons, other affiliate programs
Municipal subscriptions, institutional subscriptions, referral fees from telecoms, member donations, expansion fees, grants
Website design, graphic design, social media marketing
newly launched: photo reprints/merchandise, classified advertisements
Playgroundboston.com Presents Concert Series
Voluntary Subscriptions
Advertising from local businesses
We actually have a network of smaller community news sites that RVANews aggregates. We sell ads across the network and take a cut.
Subscriptions
At this point, most operating revenue is coming from business backers who want to keep a news source in the community in light of the likely bankruptcy of our local GateHouse daily newspaper.
Marketing Services
affiliate programs
Trade for products and services to help news coverage (ie) AT&T Wireless Cards
I offer sponsored posts with a flat fee of \$25 - \$75 per post.
I have been able to accept ads for only a few days.
Affiliate partnerships (Amazon, hotel reservations, tourism cards).
sponsorships

13. How do you sell advertising?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Sales rep	33	46%
2	Information or tools on my site	38	54%
3	Other	25	35%

Other
network only
email
third party handles it
Google AdSense
Google
I launched in Oct, so I'm it (for now)
Just AdSense
I sell
Plan to use eBay for online bidding of limited monthly banners
Don't
Word of Mouth
We contact some local vendors directly; service them with a weekly content email
Mostly one-on-one pre-existing business relationships
direct contact
I approach potential advertisers myself
Knocking on doors
Blogads
Blogads

14. Do you receive donations from:

#	Answer	Response	%
2	Foundations	2	2%
3	Corporations	2	2%
4	Users	14	17%
1	None	70	84%

15. Total amount of your donations (average monthly)?

#	Answer	Response	%
8	NONE	28	68%
1	\$1 - \$499	10	24%
2	\$500-\$999	1	2%
3	\$1,000 - \$1,999	2	5%
4	\$2,000 - \$4,999	0	0%
5	\$5,000 - \$9,999	0	0%
6	\$10,000 - \$14,999	0	0%
7	\$15,000 or more	0	0%
	Total	41	100%

16. Total number of full-time staff (include yourself where appropriate)

Question	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	More than 20	
Editorial	3	12	5	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Business/Sales	14	3	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

17. Total number of part-time staff

Question	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	More than 20	
Editorial	10	3	4	0	3	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business/Sales	14	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

18. Other Expenses e.g. rent, web hosting, marketing, equipment, etc (average monthly)?

#	Answer	Response	%
8	NONE	12	15%
1	\$1 - \$499	50	63%
2	\$500-\$999	3	4%
3	\$1,000 - \$1,999	3	4%
4	\$2,000 - \$4,999	6	8%
5	\$5,000 - \$9,999	3	4%
6	\$10,000 - \$14,999	0	0%
7	\$15,000 or more	2	3%
	Total	79	100%

19. Total monthly costs?

#	Answer	Response	%
8	NONE	11	14%
1	\$1 - \$499	45	59%
2	\$500-\$999	2	3%
3	\$1,000 - \$1,999	2	3%
4	\$2,000 - \$4,999	5	7%
5	\$5,000 - \$9,999	4	5%
6	\$10,000 - \$14,999	1	1%
7	\$15,000 or more	6	8%
	Total	76	100%

20. What were your start-up costs?

#	Answer		Response	%
8	NONE		21	27%
1	\$1 - \$499		32	41%
2	\$500-\$999		2	3%
3	\$1,000 - \$1,999		4	5%
4	\$2,000 - \$4,999		5	6%
5	\$5,000 - \$9,999		4	5%
6	\$10,000 - \$14,999		1	1%
7	\$15,000 or more		9	12%
	Total		78	100%

Comments from Survey Participants

The survey concluded with an open-end question: **What are your biggest challenges, needs etc?**

Here is a sampling of responses:

Need to find sources of 'bridge' revenue as the self-serve advertising base builds up. I have the audience, content and traffic — the revenue trails but it is growing. Finding a source of revenue that 'snaps into' what I'm already doing is key. Possible solution is working with a business or organization on large/medium scale sponsorship that is above my flat/cpm ad rates.

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I need sales people who know Chicago . . . Ad networks will never work for people who go local. You need to make a product that's useful to a specific demo large enough to be relevant to an advertiser, and then you need someone to approach and sell to them. It's low-margin, but that's how it is.

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The pay rate of advertising is too low. Online advertising is better and more targeted than print ads, yet the pay is much lower.

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Biggest challenge: Maintaining a site that provides high-quality content while (as yet) providing no income. The current model seems to be to operate a website as a loss leader, as something to establish a personal brand that can then be leveraged into profitable projects. However, in my past life as a newspaper reporter, I was *paid* to spend hours per day researching and writing... it's very hard now to spend hours per day on my paying freelance work, then spend more hours into the night on my non-paying website.

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Selling more ads, getting more pageviews. Avoiding condescension from the mainstream media and from visionaries who think that we're not contributing to the reinvention of journalism.

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Biggest problem is selling ads because companies are still leery of the internet. Plus, I need to cover travel expenses.

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Software that allows advertisers to set up their own ad buys on my site without my intervention.

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As the owner/editor/publisher, I have trouble balancing the news and administrative aspects of the job. I'm really a journalist at heart, so given a choice, I'd rather write a news story than work on a spreadsheet or a web page coding problem. I am actively seeking a publisher to join me, perhaps as a partner, to help guide the business side. Also, since part of our business model depends on advertising, we find that small local businesses are not web-savvy, and in some cases, not very clear about how to market. We spend a lot of time educating them about both how to market themselves and why the Web is a good marketing vehicle in our market. Our biggest competition are the big local daily print newspaper, weekly print newspapers and local glossy magazines. Our battle is to persuade business owners to take a chance on online ads, which in our case can help them reach more readers more frequently than other options.

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Getting advertising structure set up, finding somebody to sell ads.

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The biggest challenge was creating a useful, informative site from scratch. I have a journalism background, so I spent a lot of time early on looking for things going on in the neighborhood to seed the forum and get the conversation started. That resulted in good adoption and ultimately strong information contributions from other members of the site.

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Getting local businesses to understand the value of advertising on the internet. This problem is HUGE. Even with our large amount of traffic, it's hard to get local businesses to take us seriously because we don't have a print product.

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We've grown readership so much that we are unable to keep up with editorial demands due to lack of income.

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As a new media outlet within a somewhat competitive field our biggest challenge lies within spreading the word about our site and building buzz.

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Finding a motivated, knowledgeable sales person is next to impossible. Creating new revenue streams requires a huge investment of time and cash or both.

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Mostly lack of time. I'd love to put more time into enterprise reporting, ad sales, and development. I feel like I have a good business model that could work as a part-time job and eventually as a full-time occupation.

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Content, content, content. Without a large operating budget we cannot afford to hire a full time reporter.

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The single biggest technical problem, after the usual initial start-up issues, has been web sluggishness. I live in an area where dialup speeds are still standard and wi-fi access is unusual.

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Selling advertising - hard for an old editorial person!

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Technical help.

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Communicating the value of interactive marketing to traditional brick and mortar businesses.

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Sales, sales, sales. And pricing. I think I have a service I can sell here. But I need to sell it and then handle the invoicing and record-keeping. Since this is something I'm doing on the side, I let the sales efforts lag while I spend most of my effort creating the content.