



## **Ideas for an Easy, Cheap and Dynamic Online Presence**

Having a website nowadays is a necessity to reach a wide audience and to provide additional information for existing and potential collectors, among other things. If you want, you can have an online presence for low or no cost and without having to call the web designer every time you want to update text and photos. Free tools including email, weblogs, calendars and photo albums can provide you with an excellent and dynamic web presence. All you need is a few minutes to sit down in front of your computer, an internet connection and a way to get your photos of your work on the computer. Even if you already have a website, you can supplement your static pages with the dynamism of a weblog, photo album and calendar. The more often your webpages are updated, the better the ranking in the search engines, and the more often your collectors will come back to see what's new.

This document provides pointers about how to:

- Set up a Gmail account to get access to many excellent and free tools
- Set up and update your weblog on Blogger.com
- Easily update and share your photos using Picasa
- Easily update and share your Calendar in your Gmail account
- Pointers for sending commercial bulk email messages

Once your web presence is up and running:

- Get everyone you know (or don't know!) who has a website to link to you, and link to it from any other web presences you may have (e.g. Etsy.com, MySpace.com, etc).
- Submit your site to relevant directories (e.g. dmoz.org).
- Add your domain name to your business cards and any other printed materials.
- Be sure to keep it up to date.
- Eventually SELL ONLINE via your website, use EMAIL MARKETING to build relationships with collectors, and CREATE VIDEOS to post on sites like YouTube.com and embed on your website. Stay tuned to HeartlandArts.Net for upcoming workshops!

For more information or additional assistance, contact Amy at HeartlandArts.Net: [heartlandartsnet@gmail.com](mailto:heartlandartsnet@gmail.com) or (618) 713-2896.

### ***Setting up a Gmail Account***

If you already have an email account, you can still set up a Gmail account so that you can use all the great tools associated with it.

1. Go to <http://www.gmail.com>.
2. Click on "Sign up for Gmail" and fill in the required information. Try and pick a login name that is original but easy for people to remember and spell.
3. Click on "Create my Account" button at the bottom of the page, and you should be all set.
4. To get into your Gmail account, go to <http://www.gmail.com> again and enter your user name and password.



## ***Using Blogger.com for your Weblog***

### Setting up your Blog

Once you have a Gmail account set up, you can use your Gmail user name and password to set up a blog on Blogger.com.

1. Log in on <http://www.blogger.com> with your Gmail user name and password.
2. You will be taken to the "Sign up for Blogger" page.
3. On "Name Your Post," if you have a domain name and hosting you can set up your blog on your own domain, for example on <http://www.yourdomainname.com/blog>, or simply on your home page. (You need to know your ftp server name, blog url, ftp path, blog filename, ftp username and password.) Otherwise choose a free name, possibly the same as your email name. It will be something like <http://yourblogname.blogspot.com>.
4. Fill out the information and hit "continue," and follow the screens until you end up in the "Create" tab on your blog.
5. Enter your blog and hit "Publish Post" at the bottom of the page. Your blog is live!

### Using Blogger

1. Once you have your blog set up, just go to <http://www.blogger.com> and log in with your Gmail user name and password.
2. On the main page you are taken to when you enter Blogger, the "Dashboard," you can enter your profile information and photo. Click on "Edit Profile". Make sure "Share my profile" is checked, that way it will show up in searches.
3. Under Settings/Basic, you can edit the title and description of your blog, which will show up on your main page. Once you click on "save" at the bottom of the page, make sure you click on "republish" on the following page and your changes will show up immediately on your website.
4. To post to your blog, click on the "New Post" button on the Dashboard, or click on the "Posting" tab in your blog and then on "Create."

### To post to your blog directly from Gmail:

1. In your Blogger account, click on the "Settings" tab on the top right, then on the "Email" option.
2. In the "Mail-to-Blogger Address" field, enter the information.
3. Once you have this address set up, you can simply compose a message in your Gmail account (or any account) and send it to the "Mail-to-Blogger Address" that you created and it will post directly to your blog.

## ***Photo Management Using Picasa***

### Install Picasa

Scan or take digital photographs of your work to get it on the computer. Then go to <http://www.google.com/picasa/> and download Picasa. It's an excellent photo management and sharing software. There are other photo management systems to use, such as Flickr, but we don't discuss those here. Once you download Picasa you'll be able to see all the pictures that are stored on your computer in one place.



### Optimize Photos

Try to optimize your images, which means make them a bit smaller and lower resolution so that they will not take a long time for people with slow internet connections to open. Try for 200kb or less per image. You can optimize photos in Picasa by selecting a photo, and in the bottom menu (web album, email, print, order prints, blog this, collage, export), click on "Export." A box pops up where you can choose the location to save the exported file, image size and quality. In image quality try to choose "minimum," and as long as your image still retains enough quality for your liking, save it that way, otherwise choose a higher quality.

### Create Web Albums

Once you have your images stored and optimized, you can create web albums. You can create web albums by logging in to Picasa via your Gmail account (click on "Photos" while you're in your Gmail account) or you can open Picasa on your computer and upload albums and photos from there.

To create web albums by logging in to Picasa via your Gmail account:

1. Log in to your Gmail account.
2. Click on "Photos" at the top left of the page. If you haven't used Picasa this way before, it will ask you to log in again. Otherwise it should take you right to your web albums page.
3. Click on the "Upload" button. You can simply choose an album that you have already created using Picasa or you can create a new album and select pictures from Picasa to include in the album.

To create web albums by opening Picasa:

1. Open Picasa on your computer.
2. Select the photos you want to put in the album.
3. Click on the "web albums" button in the bottom menu and log in to your web album.
4. Fill in the information on the pop up box to create a new album or add to an existing one, name of album, etc., and press "OK."

### Sharing Photos and Albums

When you upload photos, save them as "public" so they will come up in Google searches. Once you have created the album, you can use tools in Picasa Web Albums to organize, share, etc. To link to an album or photos, click on the album or photo to open it. On the right should be a link that says "link to this album." This will create a hyperlink that you can copy and paste into your blog or email and thereby link people to your photos. Also in the right hand column you can click on links to add "tags" (search terms you think might help people find your pictures) and "location." Add any and all information that you can.

## **Calendar**

### Accessing your Calendar via Gmail

To add an event to your calendar, login to your gmail account. At the top left of the page, click on "Calendar". If this is your first time it will ask you to login again. Once your calendar is set up, you just have to click on Calendar and your calendar will pop



up.

### Create and Edit Events

Click on "Create Event" to add a new event. You can click on existing events on the calendar to update or delete them, or to invite people in your mailing list.

### Share Your Calendar

In "Settings," click in the "Calendars" tab, and under "Sharing," make sure your calendar is set to "Public." This way anyone searching on Google can find your events.

In "Settings," under the "Calendars" tab, click on the name of your calendar. This will bring up three tabs: Calendar Details, Share this Calendar, and Notifications. Here you can do a lot of interesting things like "Embed this Calendar" on your web page or blog, or get a link that you can share with people for the calendar. Just follow the instructions on the page.

## ***Sending Bulk Commercial Email Messages***

### Rules

Sending bulk commercial email, or any email involving solicitation of one kind or another and sent out to a large number of people, has a number of rules that need to be followed. There are systems that exist to manage this and help with things like tracking who opened your emails and what links in your email they clicked on. But when you're sending bulk commercial email, always remember to:

1. Make sure to get permission to email someone before you include them in any 'bulk' mailings. It's best to have someone write their name and email address on a form and have them check a box saying "Please send me updates about your art and shows" or something similar.
2. Always include your physical mailing address in your bulk emails.
3. Always include information for people about how they can stop receiving the email messages. If they are to write back to you and ask to be opted out, then make sure you take their email address off your mailing list when they do that.

### Email Etiquette

If you are sending out an email message to a large number of people:

- With an account such as Gmail, put yourself in the "to" box. Put all the other addresses in the "bcc" box. This way everyone who receives your message will not see your entire mailing list. This way you are safeguarding everyone's email address from being misused by anyone that would see it in your email.
- Make sure your email messages look how they're supposed to look before you send them and don't have any grammatical errors.
- If you tell people when they agree to get your emails that you are going to send certain information, make sure you send that information and not something else. Try and keep the information as relevant and personal to the recipient as possible.