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# Self-Help in a Click:



**39**

## Ways to Use the Internet as a Life-Changing Tool

by The Staff of SelfGrowth.com

# **SELF-HELP IN A CLICK: 39 WAYS TO USE THE INTERNET AS A LIFE-CHANGING TOOL**

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BY THE STAFF AT [WWW.SELFGROWTH.COM](http://www.SelfGrowth.com)

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## — INTRODUCTION —

You are now in possession of one of the simplest – yet one of the most powerful – eBooks available to help you improve your life.

But what's so special about *this* eBook? What makes it so valuable? Simply put, what you're presently reading is a clear and concise gateway to the vast resources available on the Internet to improve your life.

Think about it. It's difficult – nearly impossible, in fact – to ignore the impact the Internet has on our lives, our culture, and our world. In the last 40 years, it's arguably had the greatest impact of any new invention the world has seen. Many of us are already using the Internet to improve our lives, to get information faster, and to communicate.

Other people simply use it to have fun, and to explore the vast world that is the World Wide Web.

But how much power does the Internet really have to help us change our lives and become a life-changing tool? An enormous amount, we believe.

In this book, we have compiled what we consider to be 39 of the most important ways to use the Internet as a life-changing tool. Some of these methods may be obvious to you – in fact, you might be using some of the strategies in this book already.

The *real* power of this book comes in three areas:

1. Helping you identify resources and tools on the Internet that you weren't familiar with.
2. Motivating you to use other resources that you had heard of or were familiar with but just hadn't started using before.
3. Providing you some inspiration, tools and tips to help you improve the ways you are *already* using the Internet.

Each of the 39 life-changing methods listed in this book is already being used by millions of people – and in many cases, *hundreds* of millions of people.

For example, a recent survey completed by the Pew Internet & American

## Introduction

Life Project finds that “eight in ten Internet users have looked for health information online, with increased interest in diet, fitness, drugs, health insurance, experimental treatments, and particular doctors and hospitals.

Eight in ten – that’s 80 percent of *all Internet users*.

Are you in that 80 percent? If so, are you using the best websites?

We’ll show them to you.

### WHAT TOPICS AREN’T INCLUDED IN THIS BOOK?

There are some popular topics and Web sites that are not included in this eBook.

Search engines are not covered in great detail. Almost every average Internet user knows about search engines like Yahoo! and Google. Those sites are generally the first place many people begin to look when trying to improve their lives. And, of course, Internet users are encouraged to further explore the topics in this book through the use of a search engine.

We haven’t included pornography or gambling for what we believe to be obvious reasons.

### HOW DID WE COME UP WITH THE ORDER OF THE CHAPTERS?

We came up with the order in this book based loosely on the popularity of each of the topics. The more popular ones are in the early chapters and the less commonly used ways are in later chapters. We expect the vast majority of our readers to be familiar with many of the ideas, but we also believe almost all of our readers would benefit from implementing a few new ideas that they aren’t familiar with.

### HOW DID WE PICK THE TOP WEB SITES THAT WE RECOMMEND IN EACH CHAPTER?

The Web sites we chose were based on a combination of statistical usage information available from a wide range of sources including:

## *Introduction*

- 1) Nielsen NetRatings
- 2) Comscore
- 3) The Pew Internet and American Life Project
- 4) Jupiter Research

We also included information on a variety of lesser known websites that we believe are important.

And finally, we have included information on our primary Web site, <http://www.SelfGrowth.com>, because we believe it is an important resource for information on self-improvement – and because it's our Web site.

We highly recommend paying it a visit.

### WHO WROTE THIS BOOK?

This book includes contributions from four members of the SelfGrowth.com staff, including the founder, David Riklan, and three key members of our editorial staff: Todd Lesser, Kristina Kanaley and Jerry Kimbrough.

We have also used information taken from a variety of resources including: Nielsen NetRatings, Comscore, The Pew Internet and American Life Project, Stanford University, the University of Maryland, InternetWorldStats.com and Jupiter Research.

*Introduction*

A FINAL MESSAGE FROM  
DAVID RIKLAN, FOUNDER OF SELF GROWTH.COM

We have tried to write this eBook to be informative and entertaining, but keep in mind that it is not a comprehensive view of every Web site or every topic covered on the Internet.

That's a task that we leave to the major search engines.

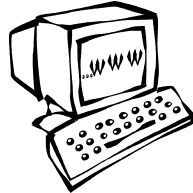
It is designed more as an idea generator. We believe that implementing the ideas in this book will save you an enormous amount of time and help you gain access to new information and new ways of living that will change your life forever.

Good luck with your journey of self-help and self-improvement on the Internet!

# — CHAPTER 1 —

## SEND EMAIL

BY DAVID RIKLAN



We all do it.

Some of us do it at night while sitting all by ourselves. Some of us do it in a room filled with other people. Some of us do it during lunch. Some people do it in bed. Some people even do it while driving. Some of us do it to one person at a time. Some of us do it to three or four or even hundreds of people at a time.

Even my mother does it.

We all send email. Sending email is the number-one application on the Internet.

\*\* Email penetration is at an all-time high of 91 percent among Internet users between the ages of 18 and 64, as reported by a Pew Internet & American Life Project survey.

I am sure almost everybody knows the value of sending out email for business and for your personal life. Try to imagine your life without email today. In order to make your email usage even *more* life-changing, please see my top tips for email effectiveness.

### TOP TIPS FOR SENDING EMAIL

1. Write a clear and useful subject line.
2. Never assume the messages you are sending are private. Your email can easily be forwarded to other people.

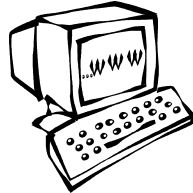
3. Re-read your message before sending it. Once you press the send button, it is gone.
4. Try to respond promptly to email messages sent to you.
5. Try to keep the message clearly focused and easy to read.
6. Use the same etiquette that you'd use to communicate with a person by the phone or in person.
7. Use a different writing style for formal and informal situations.
8. When you reply to an email message, you should include that message, but only as much as is necessary to establish the context.
9. Do not write all of your emails in CAPS. It is called shouting and isn't appropriate.
10. Check with the recipient of your email before you send them a huge attachment.
11. Know the difference between To:, CC:, and BCC: and use them appropriately. To: is who gets the email. CC: is Carbon Copy, and BCC: is Blind Carbon Copy.
12. Set up a separate email account for lower priority messages. It's reasonable to have two or more email accounts and use them for different things.
13. Double check to see that you are actually sending the email to the correct person.
14. Don't have email replace human contact. The phone and in-person contact are still critical.

SELF-GROWTH.COM TOP EMAIL SITES

<http://www.aol.com>  
<http://www.hotmail.com>  
<http://www.yahoo.com>  
<http://www.gmail.com>  
<http://www.earthlink.com>  
<http://www.msn.com>

## — CHAPTER 2 — GET UP-TO-DATE NEWS

BY TODD LESSER



The Internet is great for the latest news. Why wait for the next day's paper? Why wait for the story to scroll across the bottom of the cable news channel? Instead go to that media outlet's Web site and check out what's happening now. Plus, with online news, you can go from page to page with a simple click.

You can go from world news to national news to sports to entertainment to weather. And the articles are right there in front of you.

So the other day, my coworker tells me I have to read this major sports story. He hands me the newspaper while I'm eating lunch at my desk. I fold the pages in all different directions, attempting to make room and still have the whole article in front of me. I knock my pudding to the floor and rip the bottom part of the paper. Nothing but frustration!

Instead, I go to my computer and do an Internet search on the topic. In a matter of seconds, I'm reading a more current article from the same paper. And, my pretzels remain on my desk!

On a side note, don't you find that as you're reading an article in the newspaper, when you get to the bottom paragraph, the story stops short? *Continued on Page C16.* Do I really have to? I mean, can't I just finish it here? At that point, no news is good news!

## TIPS FOR FINDING NEWS ONLINE

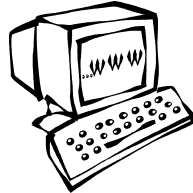
1. News Web sites sometimes keep important feature stories up for a few weeks. Take note of the article's publication date if you need something very current for work or school.
2. If you were planning to read a recent article but can't find it online anymore, don't assume it's gone forever. Just go to Yahoo! and do a simple search in the news section.
3. Most newspapers allow you access to their archives online. Check to see if it's a free or paid service.

### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP NEWS SITES

<http://www.cnn.com>  
<http://www.msnbc.com>  
<http://www.foxnews.com>  
<http://www.nytimes.com>  
<http://www.usatoday.com>

— **CHAPTER 3** —  
**GATHER INFORMATION ON HEALTH AND DISEASES**

BY TODD LESSER



Have you ever been to the doctor and struggled to interpret his/her technical jargon? And after the visit, were you still unsure about what to do, what to take, and how to go about treating your ailment? Thanks to the Internet, you can look up any number of illnesses, conditions, and symptoms to learn more about what's going on in that body of yours. ...And you can even learn something your doctor failed to mention to you!

My mom likes to use medical Web sites like WedMD to research new medication she's been prescribed. Of course, it's important to consult your physician or pharmacist when it comes to taking medications, especially if you have questions. But it's useful to see firsthand a list of drugs' benefits and side effects.

In the long run, I think Internet health allows us to alleviate the worry that comes with getting sick or hurt. If you're feeling under the weather or get injured, there's a medical encyclopedia entry readily available so you know what to do. No need to panic. No need to call your doctor's home number at 3 in the morning. Sometimes all it takes is a cold compress or an aspirin...

In addition, practically every news Web site has a Health section with up-to-date news, tips, and studies. So if medical experts uncover a new medical finding and it directly affects you, then you'll be glad you were able to read it online and email it to anyone who can use it.

TIPS FOR FINDING HEALTH-RELATED INFORMATION ONLINE

1. Use Internet health as a guide only. Also be sure to read all disclaimers and health warnings.
2. Talk with your doctor about health sites you visit, and get his/her opinion on them.
3. Don't overact or come to conclusions based on what you see online.

SELF GROWTH.COM TOP HEALTH SITES

<http://www.webmd.com>

<http://www.nih.gov>

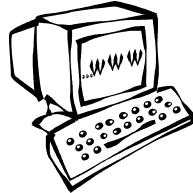
<http://www.cdc.gov>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com>

## — CHAPTER 4 —

# PLAY A GAME AND HAVE FUN

BY JERRY KIMBROUGH



Sure, the Internet's a valuable tool – there's loads of information to find on the Web, making it a tremendous research aid. There's tons of material to read, pictures to look at, and people to chat with.

But sometimes you just want to play around.

And that's one of the best parts about the Internet. When you just feel like kicking back and playing a game, there are loads of them for you to find.

You can find virtually any type of game under the sun. From high-adrenaline shoot-em-ups to mind teasers, riddles, trivia and card games, you can find whatever style of entertainment you prefer.

Many recent Web-based games incorporate Flash or Shockwave, technologies that allow for sharp, vibrant colors and high-quality sound effects in online games.

But gaming on the Internet isn't all about finding forms of Web-based entertainment – if you've purchased a multiplayer-ready game at the store, you can log on to a dedicated gaming server and face off against players across the globe.

Just make sure you get your work done before firing up that game, though.

## TIPS FOR ONLINE GAMING

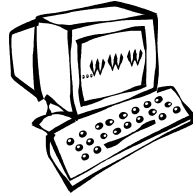
1. Make sure you have downloaded the latest versions of Flash and Shockwave – many of the latest Web-based games now require plugins for your Web browser.
2. For games that require an additional download, make sure you have enough hard drive space.
3. In some cases, certain games may have system requirements – make sure you check your computer’s specifications to ensure it is powerful enough to run the game.
4. It’s easy to get caught up in the thrill of gaming – but try to take a break after a solid hour of gaming. Your eyes will thank you.

### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP GAMING SITES

<http://www.games.com/>  
<http://www.gamezone.com>  
<http://www.addictinggames.com>  
<http://www.realarcade.com>  
<http://www.clubpogo.com>  
<http://www.gameaccount.com>  
<http://www.gamespy.com>  
<http://www.jayisgames.com>

— CHAPTER 5 —  
**OBTAIN CONSUMER INFORMATION**

BY KRISTINA KANALEY



A few months ago, my friend Sally decided she wanted to buy a camera. However, she wasn't sure what kind of camera she wanted. She wasn't an expert, and when she went to the store she was bombarded by sales pitches. All she wanted was an objective answer. Therefore, she took matters into her own hands, went onto the computer, researched, and finally made a decision. She was happy with the quality and the price. From then on she began to research most of her expensive purchases online.

Your choices are not limited to cameras. Many product Web sites will compare the differences of almost any product you can think of. Some will even offer testimonials from consumers. These are all-important criteria to have when making a purchase of something you really don't know that much about.

The benefits of researching your product through the Internet will save you time and money. You won't have to worry about false advertisement. Consumer information Web sites offer objective data.

TIPS FOR FINDING CONSUMER INFORMATION ONLINE

1. Find a product you are interested in.
2. Prioritize criteria to compare.
3. Make a judgment based on what you value the most.

SELFGROWTH.COM TOP CONSUMER SITES

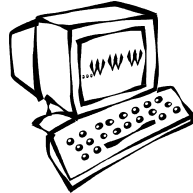
<http://www.ConsumerReports.org>

<http://www.Consumersunion.org>

<http://www.consumersearch.com>

— CHAPTER 6 —  
**REVIEW FINANCIAL/STOCK-RELATED INFORMATION**

BY JERRY KIMBROUGH



Ah, money. Like it or not, it certainly makes the world go ‘round.

And one way people have learned to boost their bankroll exponentially is by playing the stock market. There’s so much financial information online that the budding stock market enthusiast – or anyone researching finances – should have all the data he or she needs to make a killing on the market.

You just need to know where to look.

For the trader-in-training, the Internet makes it easy to invest a small sum of money into several stocks – for the most part, it’s just a matter of pointing and clicking. Most web pages featuring online trading provide charts, diagrams, statistics, and other helpful pieces of information to assist you in playing the stock market.

Be sure to research companies and businesses, as well as current economics trends, to ensure you have all of the financial information you need.

A friend of mine plays the stocks online – he started out with a small \$100 investment. Now, after careful investing, his online portfolio is worth just under \$1,000. It only took him a few months.

Perhaps you can do even better than him. Give it a try.

### TIPS FOR FINDING FINANCIAL INFORMATION ONLINE

- Playing the stock market can be a bit like gambling – it's easy to get addicted to it, especially when it seems like you're making money. Just be careful about how much money you choose to invest.
- Read through finance-related items from various news agencies to make sure you're aware of any market-related trends.

SELF GROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR  
STOCK MARKET AND FINANCIAL  
INFORMATION

<http://www.forbes.com/>

<http://www.fool.com>

<http://www.bloomberg.com>

<http://thestreet.com/>

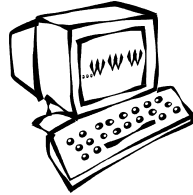
<http://www.ameritrade.com>

<http://www.etrade.com>

<http://www.cnn.com>

— CHAPTER 7 —  
**PARTICIPATE IN AN ONLINE AUCTION**

BY JERRY KIMBROUGH



Millions of items, literally, are bought and sold over the Internet over the course of any given day. The information superhighway is the ideal marketplace for auctioning off items, and has utterly revolutionized the way in which we get stuff – or get *rid* of stuff. It's like a garage sale without walls, one that would only end if the Internet were mysteriously shut down.

Online buying and selling follows a similar model to a real auction. Someone puts an item up for sale, and interested parties bid on that item – first starting at a low price, and then gradually increasing their bids. This process goes on until bidding ends, usually by a pre-specified time, and the highest bidder gets the item.

And you can buy *anything* – books, DVDs, collectibles, games, music, and virtually anything else under the sun can be bought in an online auction. In fact, one man, a resident of China, bought a fighter jet using an online auction site (though news agencies now report that he wants a refund).

Two factors make online auctions appealing. For one, you can often purchase items for a drastically lower price than you might have to pay in the store, and two, you can find virtually *anything*, from that notorious baseball card that's been missing from your collection for years to a mint copy of the first *Batman* comic book.

And using these sites is a great way to get rid of all of those knitted scarves that your Aunt Bernice keeps sending you for your birthday – and get paid for it.

## TIPS FOR PARTICIPATING IN AN ONLINE AUCTION

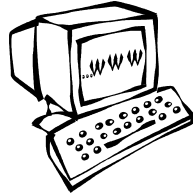
1. In most cases, auction site users – both buyers and sellers – have feedback ratings. These ratings will help the discerning buyer (or seller) figure out which site users are the most reliable.
2. Watch out for scammers – some people might be selling counterfeit items. That’s why it’s useful to check out users’ feedback ratings.
3. Don’t like an item you purchased in an auction? Have no fear! Just turn around and re-sell it!

### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP AUCTION SITES

<http://www.eBay.com>  
<http://www.liquidation.com>  
<http://auctions.yahoo.com>

## — CHAPTER 8 — INSTANT MESSAGING

BY JERRY KIMBROUGH



Since the Internet's inception, people across the globe have found countless new ways to communicate, through podcasts, blogs, discussion boards, and more. One of the most popular – and user-friendly – ways to carry on a dialogue with a friend on the 'Net is by using an instant messaging (IM) client. Users download a client program, which allows surfers to connect to a centralized IM service and chat with each other.

The immediate benefits are the ability to chat with anyone, at any time, without having to incur long-distance charges. It means you can talk to that relative living overseas without having to incur any extra fees for phone usage.

And have you said something that you had wished you hadn't? Messages you send over an IM service only reach the user you're chatting with after you press enter, giving you time to modify your message before it's sent.

Most instant messaging services offer a buddy list function, where users can add to or edit a list of friends online. And most forms of IM software allow for added privacy; you can set an away message to indicate to other users that you're not at your computer, are busy with work, or are otherwise unable to chat.

Whether you're using it in the workplace or in your professional life, one thing's for sure – instant messaging makes it easier than ever to get in touch with whoever you want, whenever you want.

## TIPS FOR INSTANT MESSAGING

1. Some IM clients allow users to share pictures, music, and other files.
2. Do a Web search for “emoticons” – people on IM services typically use them to express emotions during a chat.
3. Instant messaging can even be useful in the workplace; some companies use it as a communications outlet for its employees, who can easily share files, dialogue, and ideas via text messaging.

### SELF GROWTH.COM TOP INSTANT MESSAGING CLIENTS

AOL Instant Messenger:

[www.aim.com](http://www.aim.com)

MSN Messenger:

<http://join.msn.com/messenger/overviewXP>

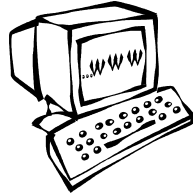
Yahoo! Messenger:

<http://messenger.yahoo.com/>

## — CHAPTER 9 —

# RESEARCH BUYING A CAR

BY KRISTINA KANALEY



You're tired of driving your beat up old El Camino. It has now come to the time where fixing your car would cost more than the car is worth.

But you don't want to walk into a dealership and ask to test drive some random vehicle. The salespeople want your money, and they will do anything they can to convince you to purchase that car, that day. Their offers might sound nice, but there are things you should know before buying a car.

For instance, gas mileage, safety ratings, price quotes, insurance quotes, package options, and other automobile-related information can be found free on the Internet. You can even find out if a used car has been in any major accidents, or if it a lemon. You can do all of this on the Internet.

Researching prior to purchase is worth the time and money you will put into a car that you don't know anything about. Car shopping is not a last-minute impulse. You have to understand the product you are buying, because you will be depending on it a lot – it is an investment. The best way to save time and gain this information is by using the Internet as a resource.

You might have many options, but the Internet will help you narrow down your choices until you've finally found your dream car.

## TIPS FOR FINDING A CAR ONLINE

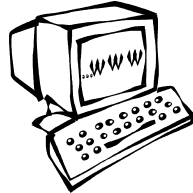
1. Write down a list of cars you want.
2. Have a price range in mind.
3. Search different criteria and compare options.
4. Research and ask questions!

### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR FINDING A CAR ONLINE

<http://www.motors.ebay.com/>  
[www.autobytel.com](http://www.autobytel.com)  
<http://autos.aol.com/>  
<http://autos.msn.com/>

## — CHAPTER 10 — SOCIAL NETWORKING

BY KRISTINA KANALEY



Have you ever caught yourself asking the question “when was the last time I spoke to them?” Or “I wonder whatever happened to this person?” These questions often come to people’s minds because we always *mean* to stay in touch, but somehow don’t because we are consumed by our busy lives. But we all want to stay connected – and one of the easiest ways is to use the Internet.

You can find out how to keep up with friends and families with the click of your mouse. Using Web sites to contact friends and make new ones is very simple, and the benefits are amazing: it saves the space of having to keep an address book, and also saves you time and money. You don’t have to spend money on stamps, and you can easily email someone to find out how they are doing. And you don’t have to wait three or four days for your message to get to them.

The best way to find out the best Web site to subscribe to is to listen to your friends. They are usually the best sources to find out about the most popular social Web sites. And whatever site *they* are on is going to be the one *you* want to go on. Be careful: some sites only let you write emails if you pay. If you are on a budget, avoid these sites, as there are plenty of free ones out there.

How do you begin? Find the Web site you are interested in. Most of the time, you will have to create a profile, where you can share as many personal details as you want. On some Web sites, you can even personalize your profile with different icons, graphics, and personal photographs. The choices are endless. Once you have completed your profile, you can begin to search for your family, friends, old schoolmates, or make new ones.

## TIPS FOR SOCIAL NETWORKING ONLINE

1. Find a Web site that matches your personal preferences.
2. Have a picture or two you may want to post.
3. Create a profile.
4. Begin your social experience on the Internet!

### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP SOCIAL SITES

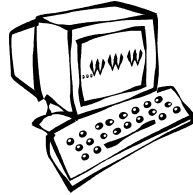
<http://www.myspace.com>

[www.friendster.com](http://www.friendster.com)

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

## — CHAPTER 11 — FIND MAPS AND DIRECTIONS

BY JERRY KIMBROUGH



Millennia ago, even before the advent of written language, some of the earliest settlers of what is now known as Turkey used to paint maps on the walls of their caves. Even then, humans realized one of the fundamental truths of the universe: knowing where you are is good, while getting lost is bad.

The world has made some tremendous technological advances in cartography since then. Now we don't need to refer to the wall of a cave to find our bearings – all we have to do is flip open the glove compartment and consult our road map. But those maps can be notoriously tricky to decode for someone inexperienced in reading a map, and can often be impossible to correctly re-fold.

Why bother with all that extra stress? The Internet can make it easy.

Not only can you find a map to help you find virtually any location on the planet, but you can get step-by-step directions from your starting point to your destination, complete with an approximate travel time and mileage.

And maps online are a lot easier to decipher than that road map is.

### TIPS FOR FINDING DIRECTIONS ONLINE

1. Remember: getting directions online is not a perfect science. Detours, road conditions, or other unanticipated events can affect your travel time or route.
2. Be aware that your travel time may vary based on your rate of speed.
3. Some computerized mapping services even allow you to search for restaurants, hotels, or other businesses near your destination, making it a snap to set up that road trip you've been planning.
4. Most services allow you to zoom in or out of any given map.
5. Don't forget to look up directions for the return trip.

#### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP MAP SITES

<http://www.mapquest.com>

<http://www.maps.com>

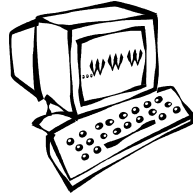
<http://maps.google.com>

<http://maps.yahoo.com>

[www.mapsonus.com](http://www.mapsonus.com)

— CHAPTER 12 —  
**CONDUCT RESEARCH FOR WORK OR SCHOOL**

BY TODD LESSER



It's the middle of the semester, and you have two papers to write. With class, swim team practice, your girlfriend, laundry, and your job at the sub shop, you don't have time to go all the way to the library. Besides, finding the right books and periodicals can take as much time as the actual composition.

But your college library provides you with access to various resources on their Web site. You can search through countless research databases to find articles and passages on a particular topic. Plus, the card catalog is online, so even if you do need a book, you'll be able to find it quicker and even have the library staff hold it for you.

So you get to work. You use the library's resources, as well as the general encyclopedias and dictionaries found on the Internet. By the time spring break comes around, everything on your to-do list is completed. When you get back the next week, your professors tell you how thorough and incisive your papers are. You're refreshed and eager to continue with the rest of the semester.

Doing research doesn't necessarily mean looking through books or conducting interviews. Information is all over... so what better place to look than the *information superhighway*?

## TIPS FOR ONLINE RESEARCH

1. Plan accordingly. Don't expect to find everything you want in record time.
2. Don't be afraid to ask the librarian or your professor for help with research. They might be able to steer you in the right direction.
3. Make sure you use a *variety of* sources in your work, not just Internet Web sites.

### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP RESEARCH SITES

<http://www.lexisnexis.com>

<http://www.wikipedia.org>

<http://www.ipl.org>

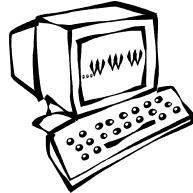
<http://www.britannica.com>

<http://www.dictionary.com>

## — CHAPTER 13 —

# CHECK THE WEATHER

BY TODD LESSER



Last spring, my friend Eric agreed to do an outdoor business presentation at the local minor-league baseball stadium. Although the other presenters were dressed in casual attire, Eric arrived in a \$1,000 suit and shoes as shiny as a freshly washed car. No coat... no umbrella... no luck. He didn't know the forecast called for 40-degree temperatures and heavy rain in the mid-afternoon. By the time the event began, his shoes were covered in mud, his nice suit was ready for the cleaners, and he was sorry he didn't bring any tissues.

We can find weather reports in a variety of places, but the Internet is the one place where it's available all the time. You can watch TV news for the weather, but the forecast doesn't come up until 45 minutes in! Oh, sure, they'll tease you at 10:15: "Will it be a wet commute tomorrow? I'll have your full forecast a little later." But this doesn't give us any of the information we're looking for.

What about the radio, with weather every ten minutes on the 1's? Oh, darn, I turned it on at 10:32. I guess I have to wait another nine minutes. OK, I'll check the newspaper. But what section is it in? Sometimes it's on the back of the sports page. Not today! It's in the business section? Can't find it.

With day-by-day, hour-by-hour updates, Internet weather allows you to go on with your day knowing exactly when to leave, how to dress, and why you should put on that old pair of sneakers instead.

## TIPS FOR CHECKING THE WEATHER ONLINE

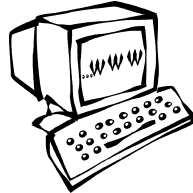
1. Five-day forecasts can change quickly. If it's Monday, and rain is predicted for Friday, don't cancel your plans just yet. Check on Thursday—it might just be a sunny day after all.
2. Be prepared for all weather. If rain is forecasted for the morning, don't automatically put your umbrella away by lunchtime.
3. The Internet allows you to check the weather for any city or town, so make sure you select the forecast for the place you're going to be.

### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP WEATHER SITES

<http://www.weather.com>  
<http://www.intellicast.com>  
<http://www.accuweather.com>  
<http://weather.yahoo.com>

## — CHAPTER 14 — PLAN A VACATION

BY KRISTINA KANALEY



You have been talking with friends and family about a vacation you want to take. Whether you know where you would like to go, or you're just browsing, one of the best places to plan your next vacation is through the Internet.

Many Web sites act as your own personal travel agent. They will give you tons of options based on your own criteria. You can book your hotel room, buy your plane ticket, and rent a car. You can even purchase vacation packages, which can sometimes offer tremendous discounts. The Web sites can also give you anything from ratings on hotels, to comparative prices on airline tickets, and brief information of the hot spots you might want to hit.

At first, it might be a little daunting to someone who has never purchased much through the Internet, and now to plan your vacation. But think of the benefits. You are saving time. You don't have to call all these hotels to get price quotes and to see if they have vacancies. You don't have to pay extra to go through a travel agent. And you can plan as far in advance as you like.

So whether you are traveling to a chic city like Paris, the exotic hideaway of a tropical island, or a weekend getaway to a neighboring state, you are only just a click away when you plan through the Internet.

TIPS FOR PLANNING A VACATION ONLINE

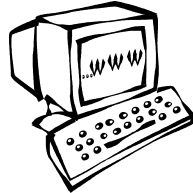
1. Write down places you would like to visit.
2. Give yourself a price range.
3. Estimate vacation dates.
4. Begin your search and have fun.

SELFGROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR  
PLANNING A VACATION

<http://www.expedia.com>  
<http://www.travelocity.com>  
<http://www.orbitz.com>  
<http://travel.yahoo.com>

## — CHAPTER 15 — FIND THE PERFECT JOB

BY KRISTINA KANALEY



You graduated, or were passed up for that promotion, or just need a change. So you're searching for that new job. You've scoured the papers and been on interviews, but you haven't found anything. Do not despair. One of the greatest ways to find a job is through the Internet. Don't trust it? Think again.

More and more, companies now go to the Internet to find potential employees. At first glance, it is always a benefit to use the Internet to put up your resume because it shows you have some computer skills.

Many Web sites now are networked through thousands of people. They even offer tips and suggestions on how to write a good resume or cover letter. Your local newspaper will even have classified sections on their homepage. Therefore, you don't even need to be a subscriber or pay.

At the same time, by posting your resume, you are saving money and time. Most Web sites have refined search engines to help you narrow down the field. Once again it's usually free.

So boast your talents and use the Internet to put yourself on the career path.

## TIPS FOR FINDING A JOB ONLINE

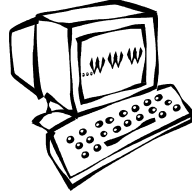
1. Create a resume.
2. Post your resume on as many Web sites as possible.
3. Look for jobs! Do not be afraid to call places and request interviews.
4. Write down questions about what kind of job you are looking for.
5. Keep looking and never give up!

### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR FINDING A JOB

<http://www.monster.com>  
<http://www.careerbuilder.com>  
<http://hotjobs.yahoo.com/>

— **CHAPTER 16** —  
**IMPROVE YOUR LOVE LIFE AND RELATIONSHIPS**

BY KRISTINA KANALEY



The doctor is out. You are tired of trying to make an appointment to talk to someone. Your friends have had it with your conflicts. Your partner is done. You are at your wit's end. Your love life is in shambles, and your other relationships are being affected. What do you do?

Use the Internet. There is a vast array of information on love and relationships. Dr. Phil McGraw, for example, now gives advice to subscribers of Match.com, one of the leading online dating sites. Many therapists write weekly or monthly newsletters giving advice to people. You can find online seminars offering programs to help you. Whatever your love or relationship problem, there is a solution.

First, you need to understand your problem and want to fix it. The Internet allows you to do this in private. You can choose what type of advice you want, and decide whether or not you want to follow it. And you don't have to worry about emptying your pockets into something that might not work.

Relationships and love are two very important aspects of personal lives. We try for years to cultivate and nurture them, but they are not without their weeds. And sometimes we need help. Before you pour your heart and soul to someone who may not be qualified to help you fix your problem(s), try to find the answer yourself and save some money doing it, by using the Internet.

**TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR LOVE LIFE**  
**AND RELATIONSHIPS ONLINE**

1. Identify the problem: take an online relationship/love quiz.
2. Search for your problem online.
3. Some sites offer bulletins where you can post questions: This is anonymous – and free – advice.
4. Remember: relationships take work!

**SELFGROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR**  
**LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS**

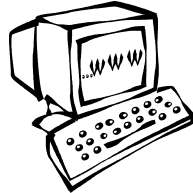
<http://www.marsvenus.com>

<http://www.ivillage.com>

<http://www.lovingyou.com/>

## — CHAPTER 17 — PAY YOUR BILLS AND BANK ONLINE

BY JERRY KIMBROUGH



I hate – absolutely *hate* – balancing my checkbook. Some people like it, but I find keeping track of every single withdrawal, deposit, transfer, and purchase to be an exercise in tedium. That’s why I do most of my banking online; it means I have a full electronic record of all the bills I’ve paid, the money I’ve spent, and the deposits I’ve made.

Check with the bank that you use to determine which services they offer. Wachovia, Bank of America, and other major financial institutions offer online services where you can check your account balance, order checks, print monthly statements, pay bills, and more. It makes banking easier than ever, and you don’t even have to wait in the drive-thru line – plus, you can perform banking even after your bank has closed for the day. Some banks even operate *exclusively* online.

Online bill-paying services provide a centralized location where you can pay *all* of your bills, from your cellular phone bill to your electric bill. You just have to sign up. Some services, such as PayPal, facilitate the use of paying bills by acting as a go-between for merchants and Web surfers.

Banking and paying bills online also allows you to receive statements and invoices electronically, which makes keeping track of your finances a snap.

**TIPS FOR PAYING BILLS OR BANKING ONLINE**

1. Most major stores – Macy’s, Target, and others – support online bill-paying.
2. Speak to a representative of the bank you patronize to determine exactly what online services that bank provides.
3. Check out your bank or bill-paying service’s privacy policy. Make sure you review it carefully. Keep your personal information secure.

**SELF-GROWTH.COM TOP BANKING  
AND BILL-PAY SITES**

<http://www.bankofamerica.com>

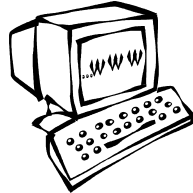
<http://bills.yahoo.com>

<http://www.PayPal.com>

## — CHAPTER 18 —

# FIND INFORMATION ON RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

BY JERRY KIMBROUGH



With the tremendous amount of information on the Internet, it's only natural that practitioners of all religious faiths – no matter how different – have found homes on the Web. The Internet makes an ideal medium to foster a religious community, and allows for the free transmission of ideas and beliefs. People of all faiths can, surely, find their niche on the 'Net.

Whether you're curious about a particular religion's belief structure or are just interested in nurturing your own spirituality, odds are you'll find something on the Web to suit your personal beliefs.

And if you search carefully enough, it's very likely you will be able to find a full-text version of whichever religious text your religion follows.

### TIPS FOR FINDING RELIGIOUS INFORMATION ONLINE

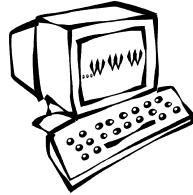
1. Be respectful of other Web surfers' religions – it's seen as bad form to criticize a faith, regardless of whether you agree with its teachings.
2. The house of worship you practice at may have its own web page – you can verify that either by using a search engine or consulting your local religious leader. Those individual pages are sure to have event listings, directions, and times/dates for religious services.
3. Check for discussion boards relevant to your religion; it's a great way to find like-minded people.

SELFGROWTH.COM TOP RELIGION SITES

<http://www.beliefnet.com>

## — CHAPTER 19 — GET HELP TO FIX YOUR COMPUTER

BY TODD LESSER



Have you ever been so frustrated with your computer that you wanted to pick it up and just throw it out the window?

“My email isn’t going out...”

“That program won’t open...”

“Everything’s so slow...”

“Pop-ups every ten seconds...”

“And what happened to my desktop?!”

This has happened to all of us. Whether we use our computer for work or play, there’s always going to be a time when we have a problem and just can’t fix it ourselves.

Thankfully, various computer-related Web sites offer extensive help and troubleshooting sections for many hardware and software issues. With a simple search, you can find articles with a viable solution, or at least practical ways to minimize the dilemma so you can continue working.

Plus, there are computer repair businesses out there that will come to your house to find out what’s wrong. They all have Web sites, so you can find out more about their services and pricing.

## TIPS FOR FINDING TROUBLESHOOTING INFORMATION ONLINE

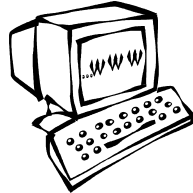
1. Make sure you have updated anti-virus and anti-spyware software on your computer.
2. Don't overlook simple solutions to your computer problems. Restarting, for instance, sometimes works.
3. Be as specific as possible when searching through help menus. And don't give up easily. Many issues and problems tie in with each other.

SELFGROWTH.COM TOP COMPUTER  
TROUBLESHOOTING SITES

<http://support.microsoft.com>  
<http://www.apple.com/support>  
<http://www.geeksquad.com>

## — CHAPTER 20 — DOWNLOAD MUSIC

BY KRISTINA KANALEY



We listen in our cars, we buy expensive MP3 players, and we turn up the radios. We start to hum to the melodious tunes or even mimic the words of the harmonic voices. Why is music so attractive? Some people might say that music is the language of emotion. Music expresses what words can not. Music is poetry put to song. Whatever the reason, music spans cultures, languages, and traditions. It defines whole generations.

The Internet is a marvelous place to obtain music. Instead of trucking out to the stores, rummaging through unorganized “alphabetized” racks, we now can type in a song or artist, and up pops our selection. We can easily download the song, burn it onto CDs or our MP3 players, and begin to enjoy.

Music helps some of us concentrate, relaxes others, or simply takes us to another place. Today we use the Internet to download music because it’s quick, easy, and affordable.

So pick a Web site. Most you will have to pay to use, but the selections are easier to find and even cheaper than buying a whole CD in the store. You can make your own mixes and playlists, and enjoy endless hours of your own Top 40.

## TIPS FOR DOWNLOADING MUSIC ONLINE

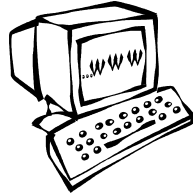
1. Find a Web site.
2. Begin to search for music.
3. Start downloading your music.
4. Create your playlists and burn.
5. Enjoy!

### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR DOWNLOADING MUSIC ONLINE

<http://www.itunes.com>  
<http://music.aol.com>  
<http://www.bearshare.com>  
<http://www.napster.com>  
<http://www.kazaa.com>

## — CHAPTER 21 — RENT MOVIES ONLINE

BY JERRY KIMBROUGH



Renting a movie is supposed to be *fun*, right? Too bad it seems to require much more effort than it should.

First, you have to track down that elusive video store membership card. Then you have to actually drive over to the store. And after you finally locate that movie you've been dying to see – most likely nestled on some dusty, random shelf, assuming the store even *has* the movie in stock – you get to wait in what are usually impossibly long lines.

It really doesn't sound like it's all that fun. And that's not to mention late fees.

Thank goodness for the Internet – it makes the process of movie rental so simple that you don't even have to get out of your chair to order the latest flick. After a quick signup to a mail-order-DVD company, you'll be ordering movies online in no time using the DVD-rental-by-mail companies now providing this service on the 'Net. Some services even offer video-game rental.

Most of the mail-order DVD rental companies offer a limited queue of movies you can rent at any given time for a flat subscription fee, which is usually billed monthly and includes postage.

And the best part? You don't have to worry about returning your movies on time – you can keep them for as long as you'd like. Just keep in mind that in most cases, you'll have to send some of your movies back before the rental service will allow you to rent others.

## TIPS FOR RENTING A MOVIE ONLINE

1. Don't worry if the DVD you receive in the mail is scratched or otherwise damaged. Just send it back – the rental company will either send you a working copy or the next title in your queue.
2. Usually, rental-by-mail companies set a limit of how many movies you can have out at any one time.
3. Make sure you read the terms of service before you sign up.

### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP MOVIE RENTAL SITES

In the United States:

<http://www.netflix.com>  
<http://www.blockbuster.com>

In Canada:

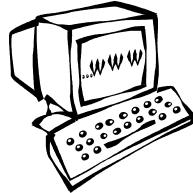
<http://www.zip.ca>

In the United Kingdom:

<http://www.lovefilm.com>

— CHAPTER 22 —  
**FIND A NEW PLACE TO LIVE**

BY TODD LESSER



My friend Jody loves to look at houses. In her spare time, she goes on realtors' Web sites and browses through the homes on the market. Oftentimes, she'll see a house in her area that's up for sale, and curious about what it looks like inside, she'll search for that house and take the virtual tour online.

Last month, Jody saw her dream home online: four bedrooms, four-and-a-half baths, a two-car garage, an open backyard, pool, hot tub. It was in the neighborhood she wanted, at a price she thought was a steal. But Jody's only 22, and she just moved into a condo. She's not married and doesn't have any kids. She didn't need this house yet...but she *really* wanted it.

The good news is that when Jody gets married (Craig, start looking at rings!), and when she's ready for a house, she'll be able to find a nice one online. Her dream home with the hot tub will be long gone by then, but Jody knows what she wants, and I have no doubt another dream home will pop up.

If you're in the market for a house, apartment, or just a temporary living situation, many Web sites have extensive listings and ads. Newspapers often post their classified section online. Talk with Jody—she'll help you out!

TIPS FOR FINDING AND BUYING A HOME ONLINE

1. Search for houses in an area you know is safe and fits your lifestyle.
2. When budgeting for your new house, take into account additional factors like utilities and taxes.
3. House-hunting may be fun for you, but when it comes down to actually buying or renting, be prepared for a long and sometimes difficult process.

SELFGROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR  
FINDING AND BUYING A HOME

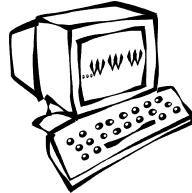
<http://www.Homestore.com>

<http://realestate.msn.com>

<http://www.zillow.com>

— CHAPTER 23 —  
**ACCESS GOVERNMENT INFORMATION**

BY JERRY KIMBROUGH



Have you ever heard the phrase “red tape?” The term refers to the various hoops someone has to jump through in order to accomplish something – and the phrase is usually synonymous with doing something governmental or bureaucratic. Our perception of the government, largely, is that it’s *slow*.

But the Internet isn’t slow – and now, dealing with your government can be quick and painless. And sending an angry email to your local legislator is easier than ever!

The Internet takes all of the hassle out of renewing your driver’s license or registration, your passport, re-issuing copies of vital documents like birth certificates and Social Security cards, and contacting local, county, state, or federal officials.

For instance, have you ever heard a horror story about the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)? Getting something done there can be notoriously slow. Now, most DMVs have their own Web sites, meaning you won’t have to make the trip to the DMV to get your registration renewed – just enter your pertinent information, make a payment online, and the materials will be mailed right to your door.

Plus, the Internet can serve as a useful tool for parents who want to keep their children safe. For instance, statewide Megan’s law sites – which allow residents of various states to search for sex offenders in their community – provide a valuable governmental service, allowing parents to find out if sex offenders live in their area.

## TIPS FOR ACCESSING INFORMATION ON THE GOVERNMENT

1. Do a web search for your state legislature – you’ll be able to find links to sites relevant to matters going on in your state.
2. Many local governments – boroughs, townships, and other municipalities not on the state or national level – also offer their own home pages. Check those sites out for community-wide events and news.

### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP GOVERNMENTAL SITES

<http://www.fedworld.gov>

<http://www.fda.gov>

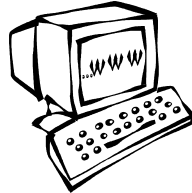
<http://www.whitehouse.gov>

<http://www.dmv.org/>

## — CHAPTER 24 —

# BUY AND DOWNLOAD SOFTWARE

BY JERRY KIMBROUGH



Millions of applications, games, videos and picture are traded, downloaded, or otherwise disseminated on a daily basis. From picture viewers to music players to games, there's an absolute wealth of items that you can download to help improve your computer's functionality, add individuality to your desktop, or troubleshoot hardware- or software-related problems.

Many download sites offer freeware programs – applications or games available for absolutely no charge -- while others offer shareware versions. Shareware programs, also known as trialware, allow users to test out a piece of software – typically for a limited time period or with only partial functionality – as an incentive to get that user to register for the product.

Some software, though, is available only through retail, meaning you might have to order a complete version of an application or game through a merchant.

### TIPS FOR FINDING AND DOWNLOADING SOFTWARE ONLINE

1. Check out the editorial and user reviews of any piece of software before you download it.
2. It never hurts to run any downloaded software through a virus scanner.
3. If it's taking you hours to download a file that's only two megabytes in size, you might want to invest in a faster connection.
4. Be careful of your hard drive's capacity! It's easy to start rapidly downloading files, but downloading too many could bog down your hard drive.

5. If your downloads are often unsuccessful (possibly due to a bad Internet connection), you might want to grab a download manager, like [GetRight](#).

SELF-GROWTH.COM TOP SOFTWARE SITES

<http://www.download.com>

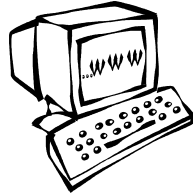
<http://www.tucows.com>

<http://www.shareware.com>

<http://www.amazon.com>

## — CHAPTER 25 — LEARN HOW TO...

BY KRISTINA KANALEY



The how-to question is very familiar for all of us. We all wish we didn't have to pay out of pocket to fix a leaky faucet, repair a window shutter, change a tire, or even keep our own lawns manicured. We make up excuses; we don't have time or patience to learn it. We'd just rather pay someone.

However, there can be no greater benefit than knowing how to do something yourself. You don't need to even take a class. There are many how-to guides published on the Internet. Therefore, we can all learn to be our own Martha Stewart, just by clicking a mouse.

First, think about what kind of project or thing you would like to learn. Use a search engine to find it. There are even Web sites created with the sole purpose of giving information on How To.... Don't be afraid to try. Begin with something small that you've been meaning to learn or take care of. For instance, try a new recipe or learn the proper way to paint.

Using the Internet to find do-it-yourself techniques saves you time, money, and makes you a more independent person. You are taking the initiative to try something new.

TIPS FOR FINDING DO-IT-YOURSELF INFORMATION ONLINE

1. Think of something you been meaning to learn.
2. Don't put it off, search it.
3. Read the guides.
4. Print out the article or directions.
5. Begin project.

SELFGROWTH.COM TOP DO-IT-  
YOURSELF SITES

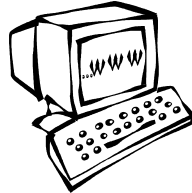
<http://www.doityourself.com>

<http://www.diynet.com>

<http://www.ehow.com>

— CHAPTER 26 —  
**BUY TICKETS FOR MOVIES OR CONCERTS**

BY TODD LESSER



When the staff here was discussing this book and this chapter in particular, my coworker Greg said he *always* buys his movie tickets online. “Why?” we all asked.

“Well,” he said, “[fiancée] Nicole and I hate the 20 minutes of previews and commercials before the movie starts. So we get there like 10 minutes after the official start time, and we sit down when the movie is about to begin. If we buy the tickets there and have to wait on line, then we’ll miss the beginning. So we buy them online beforehand.”

There are online ticket operators for practically any event—movies, concerts, ballgames, etc. And it’s very convenient. If you’re looking for good seats—or *any* available seats for a popular venue—then online ticket-buying can save you time and let you buy in advance. And then you can wave to all the waiting ticket buyers while you walk right in!

As for the concession line, Greg and Nicole still haven’t figured out how to buy their popcorn online. But they’re working on it...

## TIPS FOR FINDING TICKETS ONLINE

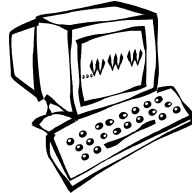
1. Read the instructions carefully for buying and printing online tickets. You don't want to get to your destination and find that you didn't follow the proper procedure.
2. Confirm the date, time, and seating location on your tickets.
3. Be aware of additional fees that come with online ordering. Take these fees into consideration when making your purchase.

### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR FINDING TICKETS

<http://www.fandango.com>  
<http://www.ticketsnow.com>  
<http://www.ticketmaster.com>

— **CHAPTER 27** —  
**START OR EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS**

BY DAVID RIKLAN



I am an Internet entrepreneur. I admit it. It started many years ago when my wife Michelle and I went out and paid for a domain name and created SelfGrowth.com as a hobby Web site.

This small hobby Web site grew into a small side business, and we hired a high school student to help. It then grew into a larger side business, and we hired a college student to help. I then left my full-time job and started hiring employees.

We now have ten employees, run the #1 ranked self-improvement Web site on the Internet, and have 850,000 subscribers receiving our self-improvement and natural health newsletters.

This was all done through the power of the Internet.

Over the course of the last ten years, millions of people worldwide have turned to the Internet to start or expand their own business. Many people use the Internet to generate some extra cash, while others use it as their primary livelihood.

There are countless resources on the Internet to start and grow a business. I have included tips from the Small Business Administration below to start or expand your business.

## TIPS ON STARTING AND EXPANDING YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE

1. Identify your reasons for starting your business (i.e.—improving your standard of living, freedom from the 9-5 daily work routine, doing what you want when you want to do it).
2. Do a self-analysis (i.e.—Are you a leader? Do you like to make your own decisions?).
3. Identify your personal skills and experience (i.e.—Do you know what basic skills you will need in order to have a successful business? Do you possess those skills?).
4. Find a niche; is your idea feasible? (i.e.—Does your product or service satisfy an unfilled need? Will your product or service serve an existing market in which demand exceeds supply?)
5. Complete a market analysis (i.e.—Do you know who your customers will be? Do you understand their needs and desires?)
6. Plan your startup (i.e.—Have you chosen a name for your business? Have you chosen to operate as sole proprietorship, partnership, or corporation?)
7. Review your financing needs (i.e.—How much money do you have? How much money will you need to start your business? How much money will you need to stay in business?)
8. Understand why small businesses fail and develop a strategy to succeed. The main reasons they fail are as follows: lack of experience, insufficient capital (money), poor location, poor inventory management, over-investment in fixed assets, poor credit arrangements, personal use of business funds, unexpected growth, competition, and low sales.
9. Get yourself motivated to succeed. Millions of others are doing it, and you can too.

SELF GROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR  
STARTING OR EXPANDING A BUSINESS ONLINE

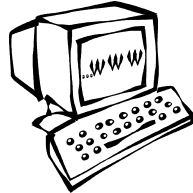
<http://www.entrepreneur.com>

<http://www.sba.gov>

<http://www.eLance.com>

— CHAPTER 28 —  
**FIND A PROFESSIONAL ONLINE**

BY JERRY KIMBROUGH



The phone book is, absolutely, a useful tool. But there are certainly things that can be improved upon – the text is too small, and sifting through thousands of names in the Yellow Pages is more likely to cause eye strain than to cure it.

Luckily, most professionals view the Internet as yet another way to get the word out about their services, and have maintained an online presence to make it easier for *you* to find them.

For instance, if you’re looking to find an attorney online, many search sites in the field of law categorize lawyers based on their practice. You can find a lawyer in any state based on their specialty, read about their credentials, and find their personal Web site. Some of these sites offer peer reviews, so you can see what other people thought of the listed professional.

The same goes for finding a physician, or anyone practicing a professional trade. Just hunt around with a search engine until you find the professional you’re looking for.

TIPS FOR FINDING A PROFESSIONAL ONLINE

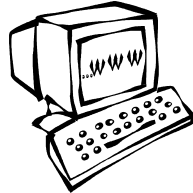
1. This is one case where the telephone comes in handy – give your professional a call, just in case, to “feel them out” and ensure they are legitimate.
2. Not *all* professionals are listed online – if you can’t find a professional to your liking, use the good old phone book as a fallback option.

SELFGROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR  
FINDING A PROFESSIONAL

<http://www.lawyers.com>  
<http://doctor.WebMD.com>  
<http://www.yellowpages.com>

— **CHAPTER 29** —  
**GET TRAINING FOR YOUR CAREER**

BY KRISTINA KANALEY



Have you ever wanted that promotion or were told that you had to expand or update your knowledge to learn a new program for work? If you have, you probably had to take a course, which meant driving to a school and sitting in a classroom with uncomfortable desks and really bad lighting. Well, with the invention of the Internet, you don't have to anymore.

Many companies now will use Internet-based tutorials or classes to teach their employees new material. And if your company doesn't, maybe you should recommend they do. One of the main benefits is that they wouldn't have to pay for your gas mileage, parking, tuition fees, etc. Now they would only have to pay an affordable online fee.

Your benefits are even better. It helps you add to your resume and gives you the opportunity to learn and try new things. You don't have to worry about being late, rushing to take notes, and being scared you'll miss something important.

However, an important benefit is comfort. You can do all the learning you want within the confines of your own office or home. This reduces stress and helps you to concentrate better. You can also become certified in something or be a candidate for a raise. It also shows initiative to your coworkers and boss.

Therefore, if you volunteer to take a class or recommend that your company partakes in offering it, you are only helping to further yourself along the career path.

TIPS FOR TRAINING FOR YOUR CAREER ONLINE

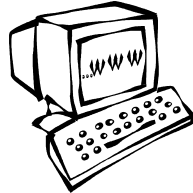
1. Decide the benefits of training for your career.
2. Research the different classes or programs offered.
3. Choose wisely after consideration.
4. Remind yourself that learning always is beneficial.

SELFGROWTH.COM TOP CAREER-  
TRAINING SITES

<http://www.amanet.org>  
<http://www.pennfoster.edu>

— **CHAPTER 30** —  
**SWAP PICTURES AND CREATE PHOTO ALBUMS**

BY KRISTINA KANALEY



Have you ever seen those endearing television commercials where families and friends stay connected through emails and sending pictures to one another? Online photo swapping is a fast growing movement and an untapped resource.

As technology progresses, we find ourselves becoming consumers of new gadgets. In almost every household we have digital cameras, which allow us to easily upload photos onto our home computers. However, you don't even need to own a digital camera to do that. You can create CDs of your photos at the photo lab. They are usually very inexpensive. Or you can even scan photos you pick out. Whatever route you take, putting your photos onto the Internet is extremely easy.

You can also use the Internet to create albums. Most of the photo Web sites can help you create different online albums that you can easily sort through and label by date, event, etc. Once you post your photos, you can add taglines to help you remember the occasion.

The swapping part is even easier. Once the image is formatted on the computer, most of the time in a JPEG file, you can attach it to emails and send them to your friends and loved ones. Or you can even use the link from your album to email or instant message it to someone. This saves downloading time and space on your computer hard drive. In about three seconds someone can view an event they might have missed.

So begin by sorting through all of your shoeboxes of photos, then scan or place them online. You might even consider investing in a good digital camera. This makes it easier to choose which photographs you want to keep. It saves storage space and allows you to keep in touch with your social network.

### TIPS FOR SWAPPING PHOTOS ONLINE

1. Begin by selecting the pictures you want to post.
2. Take some time out and start uploading them onto your computer.
3. Arrange in whatever order you feel serves best.
4. Spread the word out and keep in touch, by sending out your personalized photos and albums.

#### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR SHARING PICTURES ONLINE

<http://www.flickr.com>

<http://www.webshots.com>

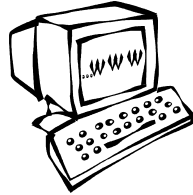
<http://www.photobucket.com>

<http://www.shutterfly.com>

<http://www.snapfish.com>

— **CHAPTER 31** —  
**CHOOSE A SCHOOL FOR YOUR CHILD OR YOURSELF**

BY TODD LESSER



“So what do you think of this college, son?”

“Well, Dad, I like it, but only 20 percent of the faculty is full time, and the average freshman retention rate is only 50 percent.”

“How do you know that?”

“I looked it up online. And did you know there’s no Wendy’s on campus?”

The search for the right college is tough. There are just too many to choose from, and too many things to consider: academics, location, cost, housing, activities, campus life...

Thankfully, though, there’s an assortment of college descriptions, rankings, and statistics on the Internet. And each school has its own Web site, so you can learn about everything they have to offer. ...So when you come across that small, out-of-the-way college with a 97-percent graduation rate and plenty of fast-food within walking distance, you’ll be happy you found it online.

### TIPS FOR FINDING A SCHOOL ONLINE

1. You can search through colleges that offer the major you're interested in. Pick one that will satisfy your academic needs.
2. When you come across a school you like, don't stop there. Make sure you have plenty of options.
3. Don't make a decision based strictly on the information on a school's Web site. It could be outdated. Contact the appropriate department to learn more and have your questions answered.

SELF GROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR  
FINDING A SCHOOL ONLINE

<http://www.scholastic.com>

<http://www.hobsons.com>

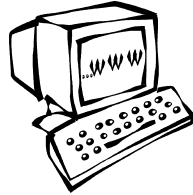
<http://www.petersons.com>

<http://www.usnews.com/college>

<http://www.gradschools.com>

## — CHAPTER 32 — TAKE AN ONLINE CLASS

BY TODD LESSER



Penny was the new receptionist at my friend Steve’s law office. At 8 o’clock one night, Steve was on his way out, ready to lock the door, when he saw Penny still at her desk, staring at her computer screen with a big textbook open in her lap.

“Still hard at work?” Steve asked her.

“No,” she replied. “It’s for school.”

“School? But you work so late. When do you go to class?”

“I’m in class right now.”

Today, E-learning (or electronic learning) is becoming more and more common. People are able to take a class or get a degree completely online without shifting their schedules to attend school on-site. Most learning is asynchronous, meaning you take the class on your own time from wherever your computer is. It’s a great way to learn a new skill, tackle a new subject, or accumulate credits... simply through the Internet.

Good luck to Penny. Now, when she’s hard at work in the evening hours, she can *literally* call it a school night.

## TIPS FOR TAKING AN ONLINE CLASS

1. There are many scams out there relating to online degrees. Most are found through spam emails. Do careful research to make sure the school or program you're interested in is legitimate. Don't give any of your information to questionable organizations.
2. Make sure you have enough computer and technology experience to take the class online. Talk with the program supervisor or chairperson to see if it can be completed at your level of expertise.
3. Try to treat this class as if you were sitting in a classroom. Ignore outside distractions from family members or coworkers. Also make sure to prioritize your work, school, and home life so as not to have them interfere with each other.

### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR ONLINE EDUCATION

<http://www.universityofphoenixdegree.com>

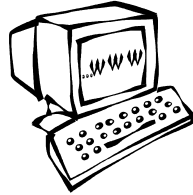
<http://www.collegeanduniversity.net>

<http://www.videoprofessor.com>

<http://www.pennfoster.edu>

— **CHAPTER 33** —  
**FIND INFORMATION ON A HOBBY, SPECIAL INTEREST,  
OR LOCAL ACTIVITIES AND AMUSEMENTS**

BY TODD LESSER



Let me tell you about my two cousins:

- Dan loves music. In fact, he's studying to become a music teacher. He plays practically every instrument, but his specialty is the piano. Whenever he has time, Dan plays in the pit for musicals and orchestras. He's also planning on starting a band of his own. In the meantime, he looks online to get song lyrics and learn more about the current bands he listens to.
- Jennifer loves *Harry Potter*. She's read each book multiple times and can answer any question about any character or plot point. When the latest book came out, she was at the bookstore for the midnight launch and finished it that afternoon. She's part of many fan forums online and frequently reads reviews and reactions to the movie adaptations.

Dan and Jennifer share their hobbies with millions of people around the world, and the Internet allows them to come together. Online chat rooms, for instance, offer ways to converse with those who enjoy similar pastimes.

There are countless Web sites specifically for enthusiasts of a particular subject or activity. (Ashley knows about this, for sure.) Some Web sites offer advice or instruction, while others tell you about competitions or job opportunities. (The Internet is definitely an avenue for Brad to promote his piano-lesson business.)

So if you have a hobby or special interest that you'd like to pursue further, learn more about it online. You might come across Dan or Jen along the way!

TIPS FOR FINDING SPECIAL-INTEREST INFORMATION ONLINE

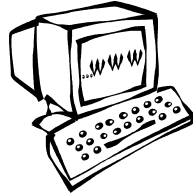
1. Be careful what you write when you make a posting on a fan Web site.
2. Don't pay money or contribute to any group or club without confirming its legitimacy.
3. Make sure your hobby or interest doesn't get out of hand (gambling, for instance) and always try to have fun.

SELFGROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR  
HOBBIES AND SPECIAL INTERESTS

<http://www.hobby.org>  
<http://www.ehobbies.com>  
<http://www.about.com/hobbies>

## — CHAPTER 34 — FIND A DATE ONLINE

BY KRISTINA KANALEY



Nowadays we are bombarded by the “happy ending” story. However, most of us don’t have time in our busy schedules to devote to a personal life. We find it hard to even meet people, let alone date them. Wouldn’t it just be easier to be matched up with someone and know ahead of time what they look like, what similar interests you have, etc. Well, there is a way—online dating services.

The Internet is a great place to find a date. If you are ever alone again on a Saturday night, go online, create a profile, upload some photos, and begin your search. You can give as much information as you want, and you control the people you communicate with. You can even exchange phone numbers, personal email addresses, and screen names.

Once you feel comfortable enough, you can set up a date. Don’t be discouraged if something doesn’t happen right away; remember, dating is a *fun* aspect of socializing. Relax and enjoy the ride. And keep in mind that you are controlling your options and taking the first step.

## TIPS FOR FINDING A DATE ONLINE

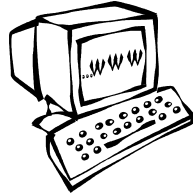
1. Create a profile.
2. Place more than one photo in your profile. This helps people see you in different settings.
3. Don't be afraid to explore.
4. Contact people you find attractive.
5. Begin to socialize.

### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR ONLINE DATING

<http://www.match.com>  
<http://www.eharmony.com>  
<http://personals.yahoo.com>

## — CHAPTER 35 — MAKE A DONATION

BY DAVID RIKLAN



Like countless other people, I was glued to the TV watching the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 and the tsunami in December 2004. The pain, suffering, and destruction were almost unbearable to watch.

How could I help? What could I do? The first thing that came to mind was to provide some financial support through donations. Being an Internet entrepreneur, I started with the Internet.

I quickly found many Web sites devoted to helping the relief effort... but I also quickly found that many of them were shams. The challenge was using the Internet to identify the best places to start for making donations and volunteering. Our tips and Web sites below are written to provide a good starting point.

*Why do I consider making donations and volunteering a  
Life-Changing Tool?*

Donations and volunteering are great ways to learn to appreciate your own life and the many areas that you are blessed. Donating and volunteering help us to feel human and connected to other people around the world.

Volunteering can help you improve your social relationships and develop many of the skills that you might not be using in your work environment.

### TIPS FOR MAKING DONATIONS ONLINE

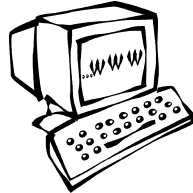
1. Know where your money is going. It is important to check on the organization that you want to support and make sure they are reputable.
2. Support organizations that are aligned with your thinking and beliefs. There are countless places to donate, so it is important to choose wisely.
3. Check the security and the credibility of the Web site you are working with. Criminals have set up fake Web sites to collect credit card information.
4. You can always call an organization to verify their credibility.
5. Make your donations through larger or more well-known organizations. The top 10 largest U.S. charities by revenue include: The Mayo Foundation, YMCAs in the United States, The United Way, Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Catholic Charities USA, American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Goodwill Industries International, New York-Presbyterian Hospital, and the Arc of the United States.
6. Make donations through organizations that use the majority of the money collected to support their cause. Many organizations spend a large percentage of donated money on administrative expenses and additional fundraising expenses.

#### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP DONATION SITES

<http://www.volunteermatch.org/>  
<http://www.charitynavigator.org/>

— CHAPTER 36 —  
**LOCAL AND NATIONAL COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

BY JERRY KIMBROUGH



Sure, it's great to use the Internet to make your life better, to make things easier for you. That's one of the 'Net's overall goals. But what about the people who are worse off than you?

Don't feel bad. You can make a difference in *their* lives, too, through the Web. There are a slew of Web sites out there with an overall focus on community outreach, while individual nonprofit agencies are always seeking volunteers, financial aid, and other forms of assistance. It's not just about making a donation to the charity of your choice – outreach organizations across the 'Net are looking for willing volunteers, spokespersons, and supporters of their mission.

Philanthropy, it can be argued, is a natural human sentiment. People worldwide responded with sympathy, gifts, money and love to the victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. Fund drives benefiting those who lost their homes, possessions, and lives after dangerous tsunamis struck the Southeast Asia region.

But charity and outreach shouldn't only occur after a major disaster. Use the Internet to help someone today!

### TIPS FOR FINDING OUTREACH SITES

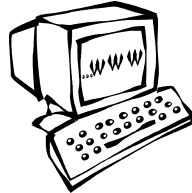
1. There are thousands of volunteer agencies out there for you to choose from – support the ones who ascribe to ideals that match your personal belief structure.
2. Make sure the agency you are offering assistance to is a legitimate one.
3. Certain local schools, businesses and organizations offer outreach programs.
4. Check out governmental web pages on the local, state, and county levels; those entities often sponsor outreach programs of their own.

#### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP OUTREACH SITES

<http://www.idealists.org>  
<http://www.nationaloutreach.org>  
<http://www.guidestar.com>

— CHAPTER 37 —  
**RESEARCH YOUR FAMILY TREE/GENEALOGY**

BY KRISTINA KANALEY



What are you? This question regarding his heritage often perplexed Mark continuously. His last name was so obscure that he was never sure where it really originated from. His family has been in the United States for centuries, and he often considered himself a mutt of cultures. Therefore, he felt he couldn't even begin to tell people where his ancestors were from.

However, Mark decided to take the initiative and actually do something. He wrote down all the stories he remembered as a child, from his grandparents and other older elders. He marked off important facts like places, dates, and names. He then searched on the Internet. He began to learn that his last name was German. Almost like a spool of knotted thread, Mark was able to unravel the history of his family. He learned they had a crest, and even was able to contact some distant cousins also researching their connected family tree.

Now when Mark talks about his family he's not ignorant of his past. And when someone asks him, "What are you?" his reply is often, "Do you have time? This could take a while."

You too can be like Mark and use the Internet to answer those burning questions of your past. And like Mark, the major benefit is just to educate yourself on where you come from. You can create your own personal history books by visiting online genealogy Web sites and browsing through thousands of records. Most Web sites offer brief tutorials to teach you what to look for and where to search. You might have to pay for some of these sites, but they are pretty affordable. You can save time and money from doing hours of research in a library and getting nowhere.

So if you're interested in knowing where your branch on the family tree stems from, begin by doing your research on the Internet. It's a fast, inexpensive, and beneficial resource.

### TIPS FOR RESEARCHING YOUR GENEALOGY

1. Talk to your older relatives; they are an abundant resource of information.
2. Organize any information you know about your family: names, dates, locations, etc.
3. Pick a site and a name to start with.
4. Begin to search.

#### SELF-GROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR FINDING A PROFESSIONAL

<http://www.ancestry.com>

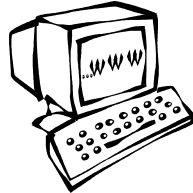
<http://www.ellisland.org>

<http://www.genealogy.com>

<http://www.rootsweb.com>

— **CHAPTER 38** —  
**IMPROVE YOUR MIND ONLINE**

BY TODD LESSER



Here's a brain teaser:

Harry, Christian, and Ellis are infielders on a semi-professional baseball team. Each plays a different position: one is the 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman, one is the 3<sup>rd</sup> baseman, and one is the shortstop. The shortstop is Harry's brother. Last season, the shortstop made only 5 errors in the field; that was 10 less than his brother. Ellis, who doesn't have any siblings, had 15 more errors than the 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman. What is each player's position, and how many errors did each player make?

To see the answer, go to <http://www.selfgrowth.com/mindteaser.html>.

-----

The Internet offers us a variety of ways to challenge ourselves intellectually. From crosswords to brain benders, jumbles to cryptograms, there are many different puzzles and games out there to improve our minds and help us have fun.

Many areas of self-help are specifically geared for the brain: speed reading, memory training, creativity enhancement, writing, etc. And there are various Internet programs and courses available to help us hone our skills. For instance, go online and try a simple picture-matching game (like the board game you played as a kid) to improve your memory. Or take an online demo to discover your reading rate.

Whatever it is you try, don't get discouraged if your results aren't what you expected. It's important to enjoy yourself and do the best you can...because

with so many valuable tools out there, there's always room for improvement!

### TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR MIND ONLINE

1. Many games and exercises are for entertainment purposes only. If that is the case, don't take your results too seriously.
2. Before you put down a lot of money on a complex memory or speed reading program, see if you can try it out first to see if you like it.
3. Make sure the person in charge of the program/course has the appropriate credentials to teach you.

#### SELFGROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR IMPROVING YOUR MIND

<http://www.tickle.com>

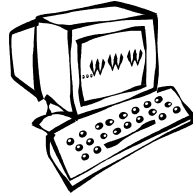
<http://www.learningstrategies.com/>

<http://www.howtolearn.com>

<http://www.brain.com>

— CHAPTER 39 —  
**LEARN FROM SELF-IMPROVEMENT EXPERTS**

BY DAVID RIKLAN



John was preparing for a one-hour presentation he had to give at his company—a slide presentation for a new project he was proposing to his managers. John was intimately involved with the details of this project but wasn't sure how he was going to present it. There were going to be about 20 of his peers and managers there.

John looked to the Internet to get help and information on public speaking. He started with <http://www.SelfGrowth.com> and searched for “public speaking” and “presentations.”

He immediately found a series of articles written by experts on public speaking, anxiety in public speaking, making effective presentations, and much more. He also found links to other important resources on these topics. John learned how to structure his presentation, how to deliver it, how to get his audience's attention, and overall how to give a phenomenally effective presentation.

John's presentation was a success, the project was approved, and he was promoted. Another Internet success story!

While searching <http://www.SelfGrowth.com>, John also found resources on time management, goal setting, anxiety, health, fitness, career development, relationships, and countless other areas. He found that there are resources to improve just about every area of his life.

TIPS FOR LEARNING ABOUT SELF-IMPROVEMENT ONLINE

1. Start by going to the #1 ranked self-improvement Web site on the Internet, located at <http://www.SelfGrowth.com>.
2. For access to additional resources from other experts, see the tip above. SelfGrowth.com contains references to thousands of other expert Web sites.
3. See the first two tips. (I apologize for the apparent subjectivity of this chapter, but in truth, we believe that we provide the best starting point for getting information on self-improvement.)

SELF-GROWTH.COM TOP SITES FOR  
SELF-IMPROVEMENT ONLINE

<http://www.SelfGrowth.com>  
<http://www.nightingale.com>  
<http://www.franklincovey.com>