

JCJazz Ensemble

www.jcjazz.com.au

November 2003

Interview with John Collisto on using the Internet to conduct e-business

1. The business

JCJazz is a 3-piece musical unit comprising piano, bass and drums. The group performs in a variety of musical styles, in a wide range of venues, and is in demand for promotional and corporate functions as well as for private events. JCJazz prides itself on a highly professional approach to its work, which is epitomised by its attention to presentation and its ability to adapt to the requirements of its clients in both musical style and instrumentation.

The group's repertoire consists mainly of music from the 1930s to the present. It can perform in a variety of styles, including jazz, swing, acoustic, latin, rock and lounge music, with flexible instrumentation which can be extended to include male and female vocals, trumpet, trombone, guitar and saxophone.

2. The idea

John Collisto, the creator and manager of JCJazz, realised that the conventional methods of promoting the group, which involved direct contact with him as the provider of all information, was inefficient, and turned to the Internet to create a website that would enable him to present a wide range of information about the group in a highly accessible format.

The JCJazz website was created in 1999, and contained information about the group, its members, its repertoire and its CV. Since its creation the site has retained its basic format. Maintenance of the site occurs annually, with updates carried out by the contractor who built the site. These include changes of personnel, resume updates, photos, variations to the repertoire and updates of performance functions and venues.

The website is promoted through all of the group's advertising, including the Yellow Pages, a South Australian business directory, on CDs and at all performances.

3. The e-business

The site was created in response to the need for a better way to promote the ensemble and to reduce the time and money spent by John in answering enquiries. The main e-business functions are information and promotion. The home page contains links to the main sections of the site—Ensemble, Portfolio, Song list—male vocal, Song list—female vocal, Contact and booking.

The Ensemble section contains photos of the group and illustrates its flexibility in expanding from a 3-piece to 7-piece format, with male or female vocals.

The Portfolio section provides details of the group's instrumentation, its repertoire, which is expanded through the male and female song lists, and a list of the group's corporate functions and performance venues.

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Contact and booking includes an online form through which clients can submit orders for JCJazz's CDs. The form can also be used by prospective clients to submit their requirements—an initial contact which is much more efficient than traditional channels.

4. The challenges

John faced several challenges in the process of planning his website. First of all he had to identify the kind of information required by his prospective clients, in order to make the site as relevant as possible. As part of this process he checked a number of competitor sites. He also had to address updating issues—both content and costs—for his site, which was planned a year at a time.

The creation of the website meant that John also had to address the issue of collecting and storing the information that he received via emails—a hardware/software issue.

5. The results

The website is the main promotional tool of JCJazz. It has resulted in a higher profile for the group. A more professional image has meant more corporate work at upmarket venues, and more contacts from interstate and even overseas—for example, from people planning to marry in SA.

A further benefit is that the logo designed for the website has become the corporate logo, and is the identifying feature for JCJazz.

6. The future

The plan is to improve the effectiveness of the site so that it delivers greater benefits to both the ensemble and the public. Sound will be added, so that prospective clients can hear the group as well as see photos of it.

Links are planned to and from other musical organisations and advertisers, all designed to increase the number of visitors to the site and thus increase business.

7. The advice

For those intending to create an e-business website, John's advice is to think carefully about what you want your site to achieve. Check opposition sites and build an identity for your own site that reflects your operation and the services you offer. Shop around for the most appropriate developer—one who understands what you are trying to achieve.

Finally, don't be afraid to invest in your website. You have to spend money to make money.