

Webooters.com

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A Blog for Bootstrapping Digital Media Entrepreneurs

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Executive Summary

The Concept

The large boom in application development, which is strongly driven by the newly formed mobile market, has created an increased market of individuals who now make a sizable income through independent software development. The site will act as an educational/news outlet to serve as a business/marketing education tool, as well as cultivate an interactive community for these individuals now working as independent digital media creators.

Background

After recognizing a lack of unserved needs to the emerging market of independent digital media producers, substantial research was made into the few services that have been arising in the last couple of years. An impressive amount of growth and forward trajectory presents a wealth of opportunity in serving a niche capacity for this market. It was realized that there lacks the existence of a community and educational portal specifically for the bootstrapper segment of this market.

The Company

The primary service of *Webooters* will be to provide news and educational content related to business related topics in digital media entrepreneurship, with targeted content that caters to bootstrapping entrepreneurs. Content categories will cover all areas of digital business, but from the angle of performing cost effective implementation in a resource limited environment. Content will also be targeted toward those looking to grow and improve their businesses with their own funding, further differentiating itself from established venues that are aimed at capital and investment seekers.

Additional services will include communication tools, which serve as a method of cultivating a sense of participation and community. These tasks will be performed by a social media platform and Forums, so that users will be able to connect and communicate with one another, which serve to extend the conversation beyond its one way editorial content.

The Market

This business will target technology savvy individuals, whom are in the process (or beginning stages) of running small (1-5 employees) or independently run digital media businesses. These individuals have limited capital and resources, thus they are price and time sensitive. Although they are experts in their technology niche, they are information seekers in areas of marketing, business, and emerging technologies, and embrace online communities of like-minded individuals.

Competitive Position

Webooters will position itself with a focus strategy that will concentrate on winning market share of a specific narrow market segment. This will be achieved through differentiation advantage, with its distinct competencies in price (free), quality, and responsiveness.

There are currently a lack of websites serving this niche market. While there does exist some competition, such as "Joel on Software", as well as a number of small community sites themed around Independent Software Vendors (ISV), these sites attempt to serve a very broad market. My site will focus on a specific fragment of their market -- which is bootstrapping individuals looking for insight and education on the business of digital media creation.

Webooters will differentiate itself by focusing on three primary points of emphasis:

1. Providing service to an underserved market
2. Work to build an established reputation of quality by offering unique content that serves an unfulfilled customer needs.
3. Cultivate a community of like-minded users that are looking to consume unique information, as well as connect with others and build on this information.

Monetization

Webooters will monetize itself through advertising. In the first stages the website will serve ads through 3rd party advertising affiliates such as Google AdSense, and eventually BuySellAds.com. Allowing these 3rd party Ad Servers to administrate all advertising will keep this firm lean, by lessening the need for human resources (i.e. sales staff). The company's revenue will thus be directly affected by the amount of clicks and impressions (eyeballs).

Webooters will remain on this path until traffic and brand reputation has increased enough to justify direct selling of advertising space.

Products / Services

The primary service of *Webooters* will be to provide news and educational content related to business related topics in digital media entrepreneurship, with targeted content that caters to bootstrapping entrepreneurs. Content categories will cover all areas of digital business, but from the angle of performing cost effective implementation in a resource limited environment. Content will also be specifically targeted toward those looking to grow and improve their businesses with their own funding, further differentiating itself from established venues that are aimed at capital and investment seekers.

Additional services will include communication tools, as a method to cultivate a sense of participation and community. Built into the system will be a social media platform and Forums, so that users will be able to connect and communicate with one another, extending and continuing the conversation beyond its one way editorial content.

Defined Target Customers

The target customers are technology savvy individuals, whom are in the process (or beginning stages) of running small (1-5 employees) or independently run digital media businesses. These individuals have limited capital and resources, thus they are price and quality sensitive. Although they are experts in their technology niche, they are information seekers in areas of marketing, business, and emerging technologies, and embrace online communities of like-minded individuals.

Management Team

This business will act as a subsidiary company of FanSoft Media. Management of FanSoft Media consists only of its sole owner, Randy Leslein. This business will be owned and managed through FanSoft Media management.

The Future

There exists potential for rampant traffic growth upon establishing a known brand and online presence. When the massive growth benchmarks are hit, long-term development calls for the company to advance in one of two directions. One, the site may join a vast blog network to increase syndication and readership opportunities, which will assist in its continued future growth. Two, *Webooters* would sell its brand and user base to a larger entity, at a sizable premium.

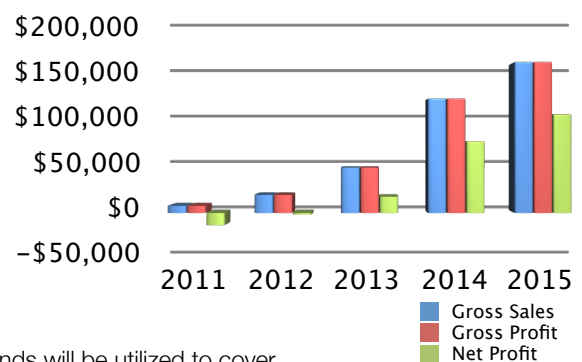
Financials

The company projects an 18 month quiet period, which is required to establish a brand and market recognition. During this period expected sales revenues will be \$7,250 in 2011 and \$18,250 in 2012. This will be followed by a period of rapid and exponential growth, with sales revenues of \$45,950 in 2013 and \$115,740 in 2014.

Funds Sought

The business anticipates only one round of financing with \$39,750 being sought from one investor. It is expected that this one investor shall be the parent company of this business. These funds will be utilized to cover start-up and employee costs through the first two years of operation, after which the company will be profitable, cash flow positive, and self sustainable.

5-Year Financials At-a-Glance



Mission, Vision and Values

Mission Statement

It is the mission of *Webooters* to build a community of awesomeness, by delivering content and a platform that helps and encourages individuals to build and grow businesses that are also awesome.

Vision

The vision of *Webooters* is to be the leading destination for bootstrapping digital entrepreneurialism, by creating a wealth of entertaining, insightful, and inspiring content that is helpful for the community.

Principals of Awesomeness

The following guidelines will measure the appropriateness of our decisions, which keep in tact with our mission for maintaining awesomeness:

1. Don't not be awesome.
2. Provide information and an online environment that contributes positively to the community.
3. Develop a community users that are interested in business, entrepreneurialism, being helpful and kind to one another, and into fun. Mostly they are into fun.
4. Develop an economically sustainable product that provides useful services for both the users and advertisers.

Environmental Analysis

Industry Analysis

Content Industry

The broad content industry has seen its struggles to maintain financially viable business models during the transition of the digital age. This has been brought about by a lowered barrier to entry, as online tools produce free methods of content production and distribution. The publishing businesses have experienced negative effects from consumer behavior during the digital transition, as readers have substituted publishers' premium analog products for freely available online information. The B2B Information Publishers sub-industry has been the one exception to this rule. This sub-industry of self-proclaimed "need-to-know" information producers have seen a variety of success stories. One example is *The Economist*, which has seen advertising revenues rise by 25% in 2008.

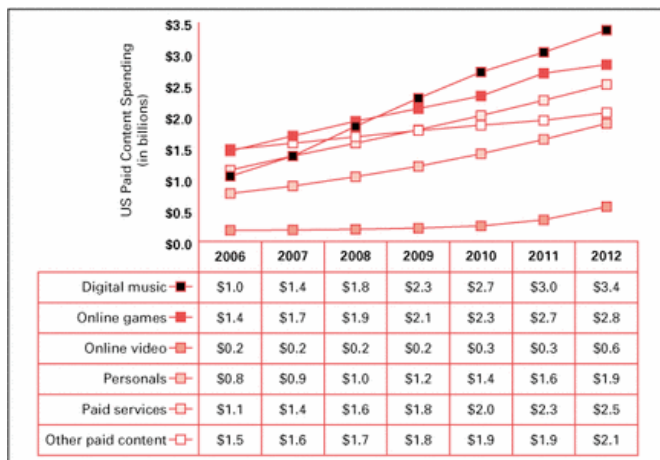
While premium content production is a mature industry, the chart on the right reveals (Source: JupiterResearch Paid Content & Services Model, 10/07-US) that the paid content industry is currently in the growth period of its life cycle. This is especially so in the online forum. While offline publishers are in a shakeout period, the online industry continues to expand. Content is becoming vastly personalized and segmented, and consumption growth of niche content is seeing vast growth.

Competitor Analysis

The following are current competitors in the business of supplying information, and a community network, that targets bootstrapping entrepreneurs:

- Online/Offline Magazines aimed at entrepreneurs (i.e. <http://www.entrepreneur.com>)
- Personality Journal Blogs / How-To's (i.e., <http://www.bootstrapper.com/>)
- Micro-ISV Blogs (i.e. <http://planet-microisv.com/>, <http://www.47hats.com/>)
- Multimedia Networks with news/information on "Start-Ups" (i.e. <http://thisweekin.com/thisweekin-startups/>)
- Developer Communities (<http://www.joelonsoftware.com/>)

The segment of bootstrapping entrepreneurs fall into two groups. One group is made up of the self funded, and the other being those looking for outside investment. Because their goals and needs are quite different, so are their product desires. *Webooters* does not intend to compete with online publishers / communities that are focused on finding venture capitalist or other business fundings.



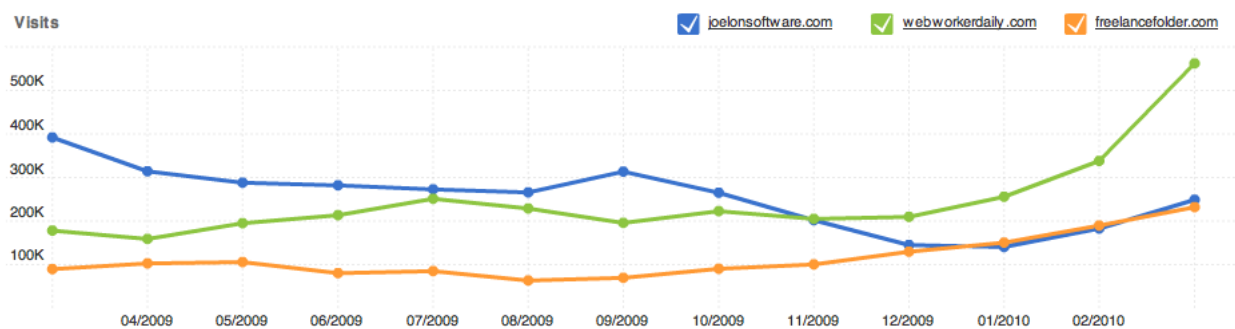
Competitive Positions

Strength	Competitors	Strengths
1	Joel on Software: www.joelonsoftware.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong brand name • Established communities and good reputation among customers
2	ReadWriteStart: www.readriteweb.com/start/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong brand names • Favorable access to distribution networks • Exclusive access to high profile names/personalities in the field • Large amount of human resources
3	WebWorkerDaily: www.webworkerdaily.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favorable access to distribution networks • Exclusive access to high profile names/personalities in the field • Large amount of human resources
4	Freelance Folder: www.freelancefolder.com/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established communities and good reputation among customers
5	Bootstrapper.com: www.bootstrapper.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established communities and good reputation among customers
6	47Hats: http://www.47hats.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established communities and good reputation among customers

Joel on Software, which launched in early 2000, has an established brand as a quality destination for community interaction, and has thus built a loyal user base. They currently have a lead in web traffic market share, by a narrow margin over WebWorkerDaily. Their longevity in serving the market has given them an established lead, however, the site which lacks a modern interface, social media tools, and a unfocused content theme, makes it less of a threat than other “up-and-comers” in the market.

WebWorkerDaily is positioned to be the strongest competitor. They have access to known experts and business celebrities, and an ability to reach a vast market of potential users because of their affiliation with the GigaOM Network. Although WebWorkerDaily currently has a slightly smaller share of year-over-year market traffic, the latest statistics project them taking the lead in November of 2009.

WebWorkerDaily (launched late 2006) and ReadWriteStart (launched October 2008) are fairly new to the market, but have a significant advantage in that they are subsidiaries of larger blog networks. These networks can leverage their vast resources of content and user base to easily promote the newer website services.



SWOT Analysis

Strengths

The firm's strengths include:

- Cost advantage (free) from propriety know-how.
- Content differentiation (entertaining and niche).
- Unique network of users who make up a very narrow needs based market.
- Low/Near-Zero cost for technology infrastructure.

Weaknesses

The firm's weaknesses include:

- A weak brand name.
- Lack of human resources (original content producers)
- A customer base who are very price sensitive.
- No sales force, or established relationships with potential advertisers.
- Limited funding for advertising and promotions of service.

Website Traffic Market Share

Opportunities

The firm's opportunities include:

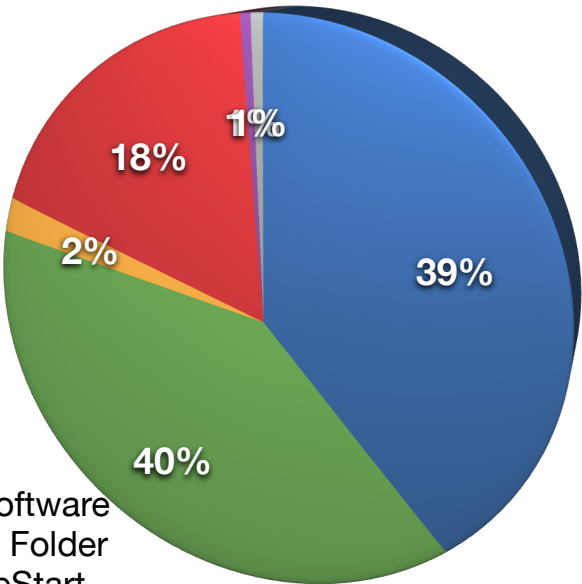
- Partnerships with content syndication channels
- Leveraging traffic to establish personal brand image.
- Soliciting user generated content (UGC) from the community.

Threats

The firm's threats include:

- WebWorkerDaily.com
- 47 Hats
- Bootstrapper.com
- Joel on Software
- Freelance Folder
- ReadWriteStart

- Emergence of substitute produces



SWOT Analysis: Summary & Conclusion

The greatest opportunities that fit with the companies strength's are in the originality of the content. A large amount of the information that will be provided in the content also exists elsewhere for free. It is thus important to accomplish two key tasks in regards to the information. The first is act as the home base for this content, and making it well presented and easily accessible to the users. Second is to produce the information with a unique style and voice, thus making it a much more unique experience then is currently presented.

The vast amount of weaknesses reside in launching an unrecognized brand, with very few initial outlets to freely promote the service. On top of this, the lack of human resources limits the capabilities for internal marketing, promotion, business development (forming syndication partnerships). These weaknesses can be overcome by focusing on the crowdsourcing the network of already technology savvy users. The user's expertise can potentially be used to in the production of original content. Users can also actively be solicited (and inactively presented with opportunities) to share information with their external networks.

Marketing Strategy

Webooters will distinguish itself from its competitors by serving the needs of its narrowly defined market fragment, which is bootstrapping digital media entrepreneurs. Other content sites in this field serve a much loosely defined market, offering content and services that span the needs all digital media entrepreneurship -- ranging from the bootstrapper to investment seekers.

Webooters sole focus of delivering to the underserved market of bootstrappers will assist in developing a brand and presence as “the home destination” for these specific types of digital media entrepreneurs, and advertisers seeking to market to this market segment.

Delivering Services for its Customers’ Needs (Company Message)

There exists a wide range of information and tools available for business owners online. For these people, finding content and resources that are relevant can be quite cumbersome. *Webooters* will set out to define itself as a community and platform for digital media entrepreneurs, that is specifically dedicated to the specific subset of bootstrappers (non-investment seekers with limited resources and capital).

Bootstrappers Blog Emphasizes Community

Webooters will emphasize community. This will be accomplished by creating targeted content that offers a uniquely entertaining and personal tone. This content development strategy will help cultivate a mood of team/togetherness amongst the readers. To strengthen the sense of community, the service will facilitate interaction through offering a social media platform that allows readers to connect and communicate with one another.

Word of Mouth Key to Success

Webooters will rely heavily on word-of-mouth advertising. Due to a lack of affiliation with any large distribution channels, and an unestablished brand, the site will have to build its community from ground zero. *Webooters* will gain traction when its own community champions the service, and spreads the word amongst their peers.

Soliciting Advertisers

Outside of potential advertisers organically finding *Webooters* advertising services, there will be monthly internal marketing pushes to solicit advertisers. This will function by way of collecting contacts of advertisers from competitor websites, and promoting (via email) the advertising opportunities available with *Webooters*.

Potential advertisers are composed of B2B service providers that offer low cost solutions that include, but not limited to, the following:

- Graphic design services
- Business software providers
- Web hosting services
- Stock photography/Design firms
- Content management platforms and template services

Other Advertising Venues

A small amount of funding will be invested in Google Adwords. This will give the service an immediate search engine presence, that would otherwise take a significant amount of time to get indexed following launch.

Other venues of promotion will take place in the solicitation of Blogs and other digital networks of commonality, in hopes of these services sharing *Webooters* as a new resource for their users.

Marketing Budget

The only paid advertising will consist of Google Adwords, in the cost of \$50.00 a month (\$600/yr).

Operations Plan

Customer Interfaces and Service Processes

The central hub for all operations, which includes both content delivery for consumers and business-to-business transactions, will be the website.

Readers/Users

The underlying infrastructure will be maintained by open source platforms, which have pre-existing methods for membership management, and content delivery for readers. The design of the website will play a crucial role in establishing a differentiated brand. It is pivotal that the design and experience of the site successfully expresses a tone that matches the firm's values and mission goals. Effective stylistic design and content tone will be molded to emphasize the following themes:

- Community
- Effective storytelling
- A voice and tone that convey playfulness

Advertisers

Webooters will conventionally dedicate the sidebar real estate for the use of banner and textual advertising. Ordering and payment processing of these ads will be administrated through 3rd party providers. The metadata that is naturally produced through the website's content automates the process of matching advertisers with their target audience.

Advertising Inventory & Suppliers

Administration

Google Adwords will be the primary provider for all textual (pay-per-click) advertising.

Banner/Display advertising, which will consist of monthly contracts of 125x125 pixel banner ads, will be facilitated through BuySellAds.com. These 3rd party providers handle payment, inventory, payment processing, and customer service in exchange for a percentage of sales. Because all administration is taken care of by the 3rd party providers, there will be no required dedicated sales time internally.

Fee Collections

Advertising “Fee collection” will be made through the 3rd party processors, and deposited into the parent companies *Paypal Pro account*. Paypal is an established online merchant and gateway that handles all incoming revenue holdings, and is currently used by the parent company.

Processing Costs

Google AdWords is a fee free service. BuySellAds.com charges a flat 25% for the ads sold, which has built into it the credit card and PayPal processing fees. Any future direct sales will be made by direct payment through the PayPal Gateway, which charges 2.9% per transaction.

Site Development & Content Production

Site development will require a 20 hour time investment. The 20 hours will be invested into the design and HTML/CSS coding of the website, as well as all server based software installation. There is an anticipated lag time between peer review, refinement, and final launch, which will create an expected 7 days of start up time.

Content will be produced by the sole editor and business owner, Randy Leslein (me). The website will act as content channel for mini-webisodes. There will be a content theme for each week, and each day offers a specific medium type. This breaks out into the following:

- Monday: Short form content summarizing weeks theme.
- Tuesday: Video/Long form article
- Wednesday: Video/Long form article
- Thursday: Blog style “Week in review/Hot Topic for Digital Media Business” or Book/Product Reviews

Hours for content production will equate to 5 hours per day, totaling 20 hours a week. The employee, who currently dedicates 40 hours a week to the parent company, will receive compensation from the *Webooters* business in an amount that equates to 50% of employees total salary.

Infrastructure & Technology Plan

Webooters will launch as a subsidiary business of [FanSoft Media](#). Much of the infrastructure, business processes, and technology solutions, will be provided by the parent company.

Infrastructure Services

Hardware

Internal operations will require hardware for the production of original content. This includes modern computing hardware (laptops, external hard-drives, etc.) and consumer grade video equipment. These and other basic supplies are made available at no cost from the parent company.

Web services

The Domain name registration service will be processed and handled through GoDaddy.com on an annual basis. Hosting is provided at no cost by the parent company, who have available excess leased server space. Should traffic of the Blog become significant, as expected in year 3 of operation, a separate block of leased space will be purchased to prevent any negative impact on the parent companies prior operations.

Graphic Design

Website design will be completed through the purchase of stock design and graphic template providers. These low cost solutions provide a beginning design framework, which can be manipulated internally to appear original.

Business Processes / Legal

Accounting, insurance, and business licensing will not be applicable, as The Blog will be a wholly-owned subsidiary of FanSoft Media, and thus all of the financial transactions and licensing/legal obligation will be consolidated with those of the parent company.

Technology Needs

The core technologies behind the website will be open source software. Content management will be run on the [WordPress](#) publishing platform, a cost free and open source software package maintained and updated by the provider. The “Community” aspect of the website will be run on the [Elgg](#) social networking platform, also a free and open source solution.

Organizational Structure

Employees

Webooters will be run and maintained by the business owner, and will thus have no employees, or related costs. The business owner (me), owns 100% of the stock in the business, and will act as the sole decision maker.

Skills / Experience

The owner is required to have a knowledge and skill set essential to the daily operation of the business:

- Multi-domain server maintenance, including the ability to allocate server resources as required.
- Experience installing and maintaining open source platforms such as Wordpress and Elgg.
- Graphic design and template manipulation skills.
- Production of creative content, such as textual blog entries and videos.

Compensation

Wages are paid through the parent company, which is an S-Corp company current paying the owner a predetermined salary. Other benefits include 3 weeks paid vacation, and a free taco bar every 3rd Thursday of the month.

Development

Long-term Goals

Webooters plans to grow slowly over an 18 month period, becoming a recognized destination for bootstrapping entrepreneurs. Projections are that traffic will growth exponentially, leading to paralleled increases in advertising revenue. The operation hopes to have a market share of 20% of the “digital media entrepreneur blog” market by 2nd quarter of 2013.

Strategy

It is this companies strategy avoid debt, and to run a lean operation that will see long term rewards. This will assure the long term feasibility required sustain through to the “brand establishment period”. To accomplish this, investment in advertising, and other operations will remain minimal.

Expansion Plans

Upon building a successful and established an online presence, plans for exit or expansion will begin. When the massive growth benchmarks are hit, long-term development calls for the company to advance in one of two directions:

- The site will join a vast blog network to increase syndication and readership opportunities
- *Webooters* will sell it’s brand and user base to a larger entity, at a sizable premium.

Opportunities and Risks

One major risk facing *Webooters* is the mass entry of other start-ups, which threaten to saturate the presently underserved market. A sudden surge from parties with larger investment capitol, and vaster resources, could bury the efforts of *Webooters*. To mitigate the damage to the business, it is the companies plan to maintain minimal costs and investment. This will assure that in the case the business does not maintain viability, it can be shed from the parent companies product line at a minimal loss.

A major opportunity that exists would be a early surge in traffic, which would result in early related income growth. This could be made possible by viral sharing which would result in an early popularity and acceptance of the web property. Although viral success is unpredictable, it can be facilitated through the act of soliciting social media networks, and other network influencers who are willing to spread the message of our service.

Financials

Calculating the Value of Readers

Pay-Per-Click Revenue Share

According to research received from historical Google AdSense trends, each page impression is valued at \$.0025 cents. Research also shows that the average amount of pages each of these types of user views is 2. The total value of each reader is valued at \$.005 cents

The competitor with the most traffic (Joel on Software) had [2 million page views 2009-2010](#). This would earn an estimate \$10,000 yearly from Google Adwords.

The competitor with the least traffic averaged approximately 420,000 page views 2009-2010, which would earn as estimated \$2100.00 yearly from Google Adwords.

It is assumed that traffic for my firm will be 1.2 million page views per year, equaling 100,000 impressions a month. This would net \$6,000 annually from Google Adwords.

Banner Ad Rates

Banner ad rates on Blogs generally are valued at the amount [\\$60 per month per 100,000 impressions for a 125x125 pixel ad](#). It is also customary that the ad sales are handled through 3rd parties such as BuySellAds.com. They handle all of the processing and administration for 30% of the cost. Assuming the site has real estate to hold 6 of these ads, the revenue would be \$4,320.00 annually.

Advertising Revenue

Advertising revenue based on current statistical analysis, which include Banner Ads and Google AdSense, would total to an annual projection of **\$10,320.00**.

Accumulation of Readers

Critical Mass

Because *Webooters* will be launching with no large marketing campaign, or previous brand recognition, it is projected that traffic will very minimal in the beginning months. Industry trends (see: graph on right) show that competitors tend to reach 20% of their traffic floor in the 9th month of operation. By the 18th month of operation, the business will be receiving 50% of its expected traffic floor, and should reach critical mass in year 2 of operation. It should be recognized that there will be minimal incoming revenue until traffic gains traction, following which is a period of significant growth in traffic and income.

Growth

Upon reaching a the current base level of traffic, the true potential of this emerging market is in its potential for rampant growth. Research is showing a 100% year-over-year growth trend in traffic for this content sector. Historical data shows that similar growth explosions in other content segments (i.e. [Gadget Blogs](#)) sustained this sort of massive growth for 3-4 years, before finally evening off to a more reasonable 5-10% annual growth.

Forecasted Start-up Budget

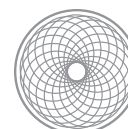
- \$37,850 for two years of employee salary
- \$1300 in Start-up advertising (allocated over a three year time period)
- \$500 for Hardware (Laptop & Peripherals)
- \$100 for Graphic/Web Design Templates

The business anticipates only one round of financing with \$39,750 being sought from one investor. It is expected that this one investor shall be the parent company of this business. These funds will be utilized to cover start-up and employee costs through the first two years of operation, after which the company will be profitable, cash flow positive, and self sustainable.

Forecasted Break-Even Point

Forecasts show that the first break even point (positive territory) will occur in September of 2012 . Positive cash flow is expected in the 4th quarter of year 3 (2013). Sales of \$15,000 quarterly will be required to maintain this positive territory. Key operating expenses include labor, employee benefits, advertising and hosting.

The business is a cash operation. The start-up amount required will support three years of required employee salary, advertising, hosting, and equipment. Upon Q3 of 2013, the firm will be cash flow positive, and will assume all expenses.



Fansoft Media

Financial Plan

Forecasted Start-up Budget

- \$37,850 for two years of employee salary
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Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Cost
Employee Salary	1	\$37,850.00	\$37,850.00
Start-up advertising (allocated over a three year time period)	1	\$1,300.00	\$1,300.00
Hardware (Laptop & Peripherals)	1	\$500.00	\$500.00
Graphic/Web Design Templates	1	\$100.00	\$100.00
		Total	\$39,750.00

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