

# ***How to Promote Your Music Successfully on the Internet***

The Musician's Guide to Effective  
Music Promotion on the Internet

**2011 Edition – Sample Chapter**

by David Nevue  
<http://www.davidnevue.com>

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# ***First Things First - Stuff to Read Before You Start Exploring***

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**Thank you for purchasing the 2011 edition of “How to Promote Your Music Successfully on the Internet!”**

Do you want to be an Internet marketing expert? Do you want to promote your music to millions of listeners and find new and interesting ways to advance your music career using the Internet? Since you’ve purchased this book, I presume you do. However, it’s very natural for you to be skeptical about how truly useful this book might be. You may be one of those musicians whose attitude is that they’ve “heard it all before” or, you may be in the opposite situation, feeling completely overwhelmed by the Internet and having no idea where to start. Maybe you’re somewhere in-between. Regardless of where you are in your music career, this book is probably unlike any you’ve read before on this particular subject. Why? Because unlike most other books about promoting your music on the Internet, this book is a *personal account*, written by an independent musician, like you, who has actually done the work and been successful at it. How successful? I started promoting my music on the Internet in 1995 and by 2001, just six years later, I was able to quit my day job. I’ve been doing music full time ever since.

I’m sure you have questions you hope this book will answer. Two such questions might be “Is it really possible for me to sell my music on the Internet and make much money doing it?” and “Can I really use the Internet to advance my music career?” The short answer to both questions is “Yes.” I have proven it can be done with my own music. My objective with this book is to outline the strategies I myself have used to market my music, advance my career, and bring in significant income, all by taking advantage of the Internet.

Before getting into the guts of this book, however, you should probably know who it is you’re getting advice from and why you should listen to anything I have to say. My name is David Nevue. I’m an independent musician (a pianist and composer) and I’ve been promoting my music on the Internet since 1995. It’s been a very long, interesting road. Let me tell you a little bit about my background...

## *A Brief History*

In 1993, I started working at Symantec Corporation, the makers of Norton Antivirus, Norton Internet Security and other software. I was working there when the Internet first came into public view. I can still remember the first time I saw a web browser while on the job. Back then, I had no idea the extent to which the Internet would change the world. How could I? In 1993, a web browser was a mere curiosity, a toy to pass the time between customer support calls.

It didn’t take long, however, for me to realize that the Internet could be a great way to create exposure for my music. I had recorded two albums of my original solo piano music and had been selling them to friends, family and fans at the few local gigs I played (I only played a few shows a year at that point). Like most musicians, I dreamed of doing music full time. So, in 1995, I did what most musicians still do today. I put up a web page, added some sound samples (\*.wav files in those days), and hoped people would find me. My first year selling music online I sold just two CDs. It was a rather disappointing start. I wasn’t satisfied with that at all, so being the rather determined individual I am, I put my energy into testing new and creative ways to market my music. I knew I was on to something when I started selling four or five CDs a week. That gave me the idea to write this book, the first edition of which came out in November of 1997.

In the years that followed, I continued to build on that early success. I expanded my Internet business to include not only sales of my CDs, but also sheet music (transcriptions of my own piano compositions), music downloads, books (like this one), information and advertising. By the year 2000, I was making as much money running my Internet-based music business as I was working at Symantec. In November of 2001, after saving up a year's salary as a safety net, I achieved my longtime dream; I quit my day job at Symantec to work on my business full-time. Needless to say, that was a major turning point in my life. I have enjoyed the freedom that has come with that accomplishment, spending the extra time on my music, growing my business and being with my family. Life has never been better or more fulfilling.

So, to answer the questions that may still be lingering in your mind, yes, you can make money selling music on the Internet. I've done it, and if you put the effort into it, you can do it too. The next obvious question you probably have is, "How much money can I make?"

### *Will You Make Millions?*

Let's get real for a moment. Promoting your music successfully on the Internet is *hard work*. Don't ever forget that. I've spent *years* doing this. The Internet is not a shortcut to success – it's simply another tool, one that can be very effective in the hands of someone who knows how to use it. Still, it's important to have realistic expectations before investing your time and money marketing your music online. You're going to face some very heated competition. There are literally *hundreds of thousands* of musicians out there who already have web pages on the Internet (as of this writing there are over 360,000 albums registered with CDBaby.com alone). How can you compete with all those artists? That's just the tip of the iceberg. Once you embark upon your promotional journey, you are in a very real sense competing with every other web page out there. How can you possibly stand out in *that* crowd? Pretty daunting, isn't it? It's worse than being a needle in a haystack.

According to the Nielsen Netratings web site, there are over 234 million people actively using the Internet (see [http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/online\\_mobile/top-u-s-web-brands-and-site-usage-december-2009/](http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/online_mobile/top-u-s-web-brands-and-site-usage-december-2009/) ). A Georgia Tech survey of *actual buyers* provided some very interesting statistics: 70% of all buyers searched for the item they bought, 16% searched for a topic *related* to what they bought, and 4% searched for the name of another product which led them to the final product they purchased. Adding it up, 90% of all buyers used the Internet as a modern-day, digital Yellow Pages. So the question is, what does this tell you about selling your music on the Net?

Quite simply, it means that creating a web page to sell your music is *not enough*. That's something I discovered very early on. Even if you get your web site listed in the search engines, you're not likely to see a significant traffic increase. Think about it. If 90% of the buyers out there already know what they are looking for and are searching the Internet for that particular item, how will they find *you*, someone whose music they have likely never heard of? If they aren't looking for you, they won't find you. So, what ARE they looking for? Therein lies the key. More on that later.

Here's the slap-in-the-face reality: In my experience, the *average* musician sells between two and five CDs a year from their web site. Those selling digital music downloads on iTunes *might* make a hundred bucks a year on top of that. Can you do better than that? Yes, you can do much, *much* better, selling not only CDs and digital music downloads, but sheet music and other merchandise. But you'll only find success if you have a quality product people care about and market it properly. Let me be up front with you. To succeed on the Internet, you must prepare yourself for the long haul (I'm talking years) and prepare to work hard. Success on the Internet won't come overnight.

As you read this book, keep the following questions in the back of your mind. They hold the key to successful online music promotion:

- *What is unique about my music?*
- *What general style of music are my fans most interested in?*
- *What other artists do my fans compare my music to?*
- *What other artist would the “average person on the street” say my music sounds like? and most importantly....*
- *Who is my target customer?*
- *What is my target customer searching for on the Internet?*
- *Where does my target customer spend their leisure time on the Internet?*
- *Where does my target customer go to find and listen to new music on the Internet?*
- *How can I use that information to bring that target customer to my web site?*

Within the pages of this book I will show you what marketing ideas worked for me and steer you away from those that didn't. Although I cannot make any guarantees about how well these ideas will work for you, if you put the ideas in this book into practice, you should see some improvement in the overall income you're generating from the Internet. For me, the improvement was immediately noticeable and over time it has become quite dramatic.

So, to answer the question I posed at the beginning of this section, no, you are not likely to make *millions* on the Internet doing just music. But you can bring in a *good, steady income*. In 2010, I was able to generate an average income of over \$6,000 per month just from sales of my music via the Internet. That income came from CD sales, digital music downloads and sheet music sales. *In addition* to that, I earned income from concert tours, performances and fees (all self-booked, promoted and arranged online), CDs sold at those performances, music licensing, music royalties, Internet radio subscriptions (I created an Internet radio station just to promote my music), advertisement revenue and, of course, sales of this book. With all those different revenue streams going, I make a very nice living, and every single thing I do is related to the music business I love. How great is that? What a blessing!

Of course, money isn't everything. There's still the question of using the Internet to advance your music career, and that's something the Internet can help you do also. I've been able to generate a lot of publicity for my music online. As a result, not only do I sell a lot of music, but I often receive requests to have my music used in independent film and media projects. I've negotiated three distribution deals overseas as a result of someone finding my music online. One company is using my music on an internationally distributed DVD series that raises funds for various charities. NBC contacted me to inquire about using my music in a made-for-TV film. Photographers are regularly (almost weekly) asking to license my music for use on their web sites, slide shows, and DVD presentations. The Wall Street Journal took notice of my efforts, including me on their “New Media Power List” of people “being catapulted into positions of enormous influence” (July 29, 2006 edition). Finally, I'm playing a lot more gigs in a lot more places as a direct result of marketing my music online and as you know, the more you play live, the more doors get opened up for you. You, like me, can use the Internet to *create opportunities* for your music, and the more opportunities you create, the more likely you are to gain new fans, sell more music, book larger paying gigs, and of course, make those contacts you want to make within the music industry.

**A Note on Gigs and Touring:** One of the most unexpected “surprises” I've had as a result of promoting my music online is the ease with which I can now set up and book my own concert tours across the country. This isn't something I expected to happen. In fact, only a few years ago I was quoted as saying “I will never tour - I have no desire to tour.” But after the success I've had promoting my music online, the demand from my fans for live shows became something I could no longer ignore. I realized that by not touring, I was leaving money (and potentially new customers) on the table. I now book three to four tours a year using my *fan base* as my only significant booking resource. It's exciting!



I know many reading this book may be of the mind that they will never tour or perform live. Well, as the old adage goes, never say never. You CAN be successful promoting and selling your music online without performing live – I did that very thing for years. But if you do find success, you may discover that booking concerts is not only easy to do, it's a serious revenue generator. I'll be devoting an entire chapter to the topic of booking your own concerts and tours later.

### *Getting Signed*

I get email almost every day from musicians looking to be signed by a major record label. Perhaps you too, have aspirations of “making it big” in the music business. If there is one thing I've learned over the years, it's that record labels aren't looking for fly-by-night musicians and songwriters to turn into stars (American Idol and a few other copycat TV shows being the exception). They are looking for musicians who are already *doing the work*. They are looking for artists who have created a huge fan base, sold tens of thousands of CDs (or hundreds of thousands of downloads) and played sold-out shows all *on their own*. What I'm saying, in a roundabout way, is this: if you want to make it big and get signed to a major label, the best way to do that is to forget about being signed to a major label and do the work yourself. Get out there, play your music, build your fan base, and sell your music. Your goal should *not* be to “get signed,” but to bring yourself to a point to where you no longer *need* the backing of a record label. Once you reach that point, and you have a marketable name and product, *then* you might find some A&R people knocking on your door. Maybe. But keep this in mind: over the next few years, record labels, as we know them, may not exist. Very few labels actually develop artists anymore. They develop *product*. Are you a product? Or are you an artist? In this modern era, you cannot rely on a record label to “discover” you. If you want your music to be found by new fans, YOU must be the record label. YOU are the record label.

My intent with these comments isn't to discourage you, but to *empower* you. You don't need a contract with a major label to have a successful music career. If you are seeking only *fame* and the satisfaction of seeing your face in People magazine someday, then yes, you'll probably need the backing of big money to help you do that. But if you just want to do music full-time and be the quintessential artist, that's something you can do all on your own. The Internet can help you reach that goal. I'm living proof of that.

My goal with this book is quite simple. I want to teach other musicians to use the Internet the way I have, not only to bring in more income, but to gain significant exposure for their music. I will show you how to target an audience *most likely* to buy your music. I will show you how to convert visitors to your web site into sales, and how to increase your fan base. I will show you how to sell more CDs, how to sell music downloads, and how and where to distribute your music online. Basically, I'm going to use this book to pass on pretty much everything I know about marketing music on the Internet. Whatever your end goal is, if it involves using the Internet to promote your music, this book will help you do that.

### *But Will it Really Work for ME?*

One of the most common questions I get is...

“You're a solo piano artist, but my music is (*insert your own musical genre here*) and I live in (*insert your country of residence here*). Will your marketing ideas work for me?”

Let me assure you that the style of music doesn't really matter. What matters isn't so much *what* you're selling as it is *who* you're selling to and knowing how to target that particular audience. Finding your audience is what this book will help you do.

There are really only two basic requirements for creating music people will buy. First, your music must be the sort that someone, somewhere, would be drawn to purchase if they had the opportunity to hear it. Second,

your recordings must be *quality* recordings. Obviously, you'll have a tougher time selling music that sounds terrible than something that sounds polished and professional. So, while I'm not prepared to say this book will help you sell your music if it's poorly written, performed, produced and recorded, if your music is quality music that someone, somewhere can feel and relate to, then you have something you can market online.

As to your location, your country of residence, that doesn't really matter either. The Internet is global. I could sell my music from anywhere on the planet so long as I had a good, solid Internet connection with unrestricted access to the rest of the world.

Like what you've read so far? This is just the first chapter...

Read more about *How to Promote Your Music Successfully on the Internet* or make your purchase at <http://www.promoteyourmusic.com>