

Townsville Bulletin

Townsville webmaster's mission

[FRANCINE PULLMAN](#)

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WITH a flair for art and a love of computers, website design was the obvious career choice for Damien Viero.

Damien grew up in Ayr and recalls his sense of rural isolation played a big part in shaping his future success as a webmaster.

Ironically, taking refuge in cyberspace as a teenager broadened his horizons big time. Now Damien enjoys living in Townsville but regularly deals with international clients, without ever leaving home.

"Above&Beyond Web Specialists is a professional web design and e-commerce development business located in sunny North Queensland but we meet and work with selective clients from all over Australia and the globe," Damien said.

Indeed I tracked Damien down through the web where his business details were the signature at the foot of the page – a modern and effective way of marketing in the new millennium.

"We specialise in web site design, e-commerce, domain name registration, web hosting, search engine marketing, flash multimedia and custom web applications development," he explained.

That's how the company's details got to be advertised on the bottom of a website page and that's how the business continues to grow with almost no deliberate marketing efforts.

But like many, Damien began his career began doing what he loved most. Earning money was secondary.

"I remember one school holidays after grade 10 I was bored and decided to make better use of my time.

"I didn't know a lot about web design but I knew it combined both art and computers so I thought I'd give it a go. I researched what programs to use and went out and purchased a book on 'Flash and Dreamweaver' and began reading. Before I knew it I had made my first website," he said.

"Once my first website was built, I showed it to one of my friends and he showed it to his older brother who happened to own a computer shop. I think I received \$350 for my first web site and I was very pleased."

Damien went on to complete a Bachelors degree in Information Technology at JCU and is currently working towards completing an MBA.

"However, all of my web design skills have been self-taught from books, online web design forums and through eight years' experience building close to 100 different projects.

"I've been running my own business from such a young age, I've never really had the spare time to seek other jobs/experience in other firms."

Damien advises others aspiring to enter the field to get familiar with some key programs, among them Adobe Flash, Dreamweaver and Photoshop.

"Also if you wish to cater for dynamic web sites like Shopping Carts, Content Management Systems, Mailing Lists, Member areas etc, you definitely need sound knowledge in a programming language like PHP, AJAX, ASP and also database design."

These skills can be learned in any university IT degree but he said just as important were good communication skills and the ability to provide prompt and friendly service.

One of the perks of the industry is the ability to work from anywhere in the world, so long as there's internet access and the ability to work any hours you choose.

But it is a creative industry too, so challenges can be overcoming perfectionism and creative block.

"I guess after having built nearly 100 sites, it gets harder and harder trying to think of the new ideas, but each time when you think you've got some kind of writer's block another idea pops up and you create something wonderful again.

"It always helps when the client knows exactly what they want, because you can just go off and create it," he said.

Damien has a home office but most of his client contact is via the internet and email.

His advice to aspiring webmasters?

"Many people can create a web site. You need to find something that sets you apart from the pack and hope that people can see that. Creativity is the key."



CYBER SUCCESS ... web designer Damien Viero

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