



Free advertising for your business is just a click away

By Molly Morris, memDesigns, April 2008

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Forgive me if this article reads more like an infomercial, but my intention with these newsletters is to provide you with useful information for your business, and infomercial or not, Craigslist is simply one of the best tools I know of on the web for promoting your business, finding clients, and locating resources.

If you are not familiar with [Craigslist](#), here's the story. Craigslist was started in 1995 by Craig Newmark of San Francisco, who just wanted a place to list local events. And in fact, that's all it was for 5 years. But in 2000, well, it was one of those things – right place, right time, right product. Craig was asked to expand his list to 9 US cities, and the ball was rolling. Craigslist is now in 450 cities worldwide, running classified advertising for jobs, housing, goods, services, local activities – you name it. Currently, more than 30 million people log on to Craigslist each month, posting more than 30 million classified ads. Craigslist supports its operation by charging for job ads in 10 major US cities, and for apartment listings in NYC. Otherwise, everything is free.

So how, can it work for your business?

1. **Advertise your business for free.** [Craigslist](#) has a Services section where you can post an advertisement in a specific service area. If you set up a user account first, then you will be able to track your postings, as well as re-post, edit and delete postings. Ads can include graphics and some HTML formatting, and you can have users either email you through your business email address or through an anonymous email address.
2. **Find people who need your services.** The Gigs section is where people looking for help post their needs. You can browse through here and respond to potential clients with your business pitch. Similarly, the Jobs section can be used as a tool for finding clients. Although posts to this section are generally looking for employees, there's often a good case to be made to employers for outsourcing to your business instead.
3. **Grow your staff.** By either posting your own Job ad, or browsing through resumes, you can hire full-time, part-time, permanent, temporary or contract help for your business.
4. **Find equipment, locations, supplies.** Craigslist's classified ads include a multitude of categories, as well as a listing of free giveaways.
5. **Look for and post business events.** You can use Craigslist's Events Calendar and Community Activities section to find local events of interest to you or your business, or advertise your own business event and draw new clients.
6. **Communicate with other like-minded business folk.** Craigslist hosts forums on a wide range of topics. If there's one related to your business, you can swap information, ask questions, answer other people's questions or just monitor what's on people's minds.

This infomercial comes with one warning – there is so much to see on [Craigslist](#) that you can easily get distracted and lose track of time. One of my favourite daydream time wasters is to go into the Craigslist in some exotic city, and see who's looking for a house-swap.