

Industry PR guru and show organiser, Simon Burton, delivers another snappy sermon

Internet traffic

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Simon Burton's exhibition industry career includes working with a leading organiser, contractor and PR agency. He established his own dedicated exhibition PR agency, Exposure Communications, in 2000 and launched The Exhibiting Show last year.

*What is your all-time favourite band?
"AC/DC or The Smiths."*

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I've just taken a break from an online Poker Tournament in which I've been playing to write this month's column. I was losing terribly so don't worry about me being distracted when I go back to it - I'm not going back. Online Texas Hold 'em poker has taken the internet by storm in recent months which might, on first sight, suggest that the virtual world is winning over the real world. In fact nothing could be further from the truth.

The boom in internet poker rooms has seen a corresponding boom in kitchen table poker, the virtual feeding the real. More significantly still, the most popular online tournaments are those which are "satellite tournaments", where the winners get to play in the major casino's real events against professional and celebrity players. That's right, one of the prizes for winning online is you get to do it in the flesh.

This is typical of the relationship which has developed between the internet and live marketing, both feeding off the other. Among media owners, exhibition organisers have been some of the most enthusiastic adopters of

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websites as promotional tools and brand extensions. And this is where things start to get even more interesting for exhibitors. The pages on exhibition websites, which receive the most and longest traffic are the pages where exhibitors have taken the opportunity to upload company descriptions, press releases, brochures and photographs. Rather obviously visitors use exhibition websites to plan their visit and if they can't find your information then they can't plan to visit you.

It's been well documented that exhibiting companies who send out pre-mailers to prospects are those who see the best results at a show. We could well be seeing the first signs that it's those companies who make best use of the online opportunities offered by exhibition organisers who give themselves an advantage over their competitors on the show floor.

One final website you should pay attention to www.exhibitingshow.co.uk - get yourself registered at this satellite event and start planning for the real thing. The Exhibiting Show 20-30 June, Excel, where everyone is a winner.