Making Everything Easier!™

UK Edition

2nd Edition

Starting & Running an Online Business

FOR DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Attract new customers and keep them coming back
- Improve your search engine rankings
- Select the right web host and design tools for your business

Kim Gilmour
Co-author of eBay.co.uk Business All-in-One For Dummies

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Starting and Running an Online Business For Dummies®, 2nd Edition

Visit www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/startingrunninganonlinebusinessuk to view this book's cheat sheet.

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Technology Blogs
Mashable.com
UKbusinessforums.co.uk

Cheat Sheet

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by Kim Gilmour, Dan Matthews and Greg Holden

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About the Authors

Kim Gilmour is a freelance journalist and author with more than 13 years of experience demystifying the world of technology for small businesses and consumers. As senior researcher/writer at *Which? Computing*, the UK's biggest computing magazine, she has conducted high-profile news investigations, product reviews and tutorials and is still a regular contributor. She was also features editor at *Internet Magazine*, one of the first publications to help businesses get online and guide them through the rise and subsequent fall of the dotcom boom. Prior to this she was assistant editor at an Australian business technology title. Kim's articles have appeared in *Web User, PC Pro* and *Computer Shopper,* amongst others. She is the author of *Digital Photography for the Older and Wiser, Spotify For Dummies* (October 2011) and is co-author of *eBay.co.uk for Business All-in-One For Dummies* and *Starting and Running a Business All-in-One 2e.* All books are published by Wiley.

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realbusiness.co.uk, Dan writes about stellar business success stories as well as up-and-coming start-ups.

He was previously Group Online Editor of Crimson Business Publishing, with responsibility for sites such as startups.co.uk and growingbusiness.co.uk. He has contributed to a range of business magazines, including being contributing editor of *Real Business Magazine* and *Growing Business Magazine*, and is the co-author of *Starting a Business on eBay.co.uk For Dummies*.

Greg Holden: Greg Holden started a small business called Stylus Media, which is a group of editorial, design, and computer professionals who produce both print and electronic publications. The company gets its name from a recording stylus that reads the traces left on a disk by voices or instruments and translates those signals into electronic data that can be amplified and enjoyed by many. He has been self-employed for the past ten years. He is an avid user of eBay, both as a buyer and seller, and he recently started his own blog.

One of the ways Greg enjoys communicating is through explaining technical subjects in nontechnical language. The first edition of *Starting an Online Business For Dummies* was the ninth of his more than 30 computer books. He also authored *eBay PowerUser's Bible* for Wiley Publishing. Over the years, Greg has been a contributing editor of *Computer Currents* magazine, where he writes a monthly column. He also contributes to *PC World* and the University of Illinois at Chicago alumni magazine. Other projects have included preparing documentation for an electronics catalog company in Chicago and creating online courses on Windows 2000 and Microsoft Word 2000.

Greg balances his technical expertise and his entrepreneurial experience with his love of literature. He received an M.A. in English from the University of Illinois at Chicago and also writes general interest books, short stories, and poetry. Among his

editing assignments is the monthly newsletter for his daughters' grade school.

After graduating from college, Greg became a reporter for his hometown newspaper. Working at the publications office at the University of Chicago was his next job, and it was there that he started to use computers. He discovered, as the technology became available, that he loved desktop publishing (with the Macintosh and LaserWriter) and, later on, the World Wide Web.

Greg loves to travel, but since his two daughters were born, he hasn't been able to get around much. He was able to translate his experiences into a book called *Karma Kids: Answering Everyday Parenting Questions with Buddhist Wisdom.* However, through the Web, he enjoys traveling vicariously and meeting people online. He lives with his family in an old house in Chicago that he has been rehabbing for – well, for many years now. He is a collector of objects such as pens, cameras, radios, and hats. He is always looking for things to take apart so that he can see how they work and fix them up. Many of the same skills prove useful in creating and maintaining Web pages. He is an active member of Jewel Heart, a Tibetan Buddhist meditation and study group based in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Dedication

Kim: For Audrey.

Greg: To my best friend Ann Lindner, who makes everything possible.

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Greg: One of the things I like best about this book is that it's a teaching tool that gives me a chance to share my knowledge – small business owner to small business owner – about computers, the Internet, and communicating your message to others in an interactive way. As any businessperson knows, most large-scale projects are a team effort.

The most successful entrepreneurs also tend to be the ones who were the most generous with their time and experience. They taught me that the more helpful you are, the more successful you'll be in return.

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Introduction

You've been thinking about starting your own business, but until now, it was just a dream. After all, you're a busy person. You have a full-time job, whether it's running your home or as part of the rat race. Perhaps you've been through a life-changing event and are ready to move in a new direction.

Well, we have news for you: *now* is the perfect time to turn your dream into reality by starting your own web-based business. People just like you are making money and enriching their lives by starting up online. Opening hours don't exist, but you can work when you need to, and the location of your business makes no difference. Anyone can run a small business from the comfort of a home office – even if it's just your spare bedroom. And you can make money online in an ever increasing number of ways, such as running your own blog, starting a business on eBay or dreaming up something entirely unique.

If you like the idea of being in business for yourself, but you don't have a particular product or service in mind at the moment, keep a lookout for openings and ideas: what could you put online that isn't there already? The Internet is home to many diverse businesses that have 'made it' in their own way. Among the entrepreneurs we interviewed for this book are a woman who sells waterproof cushion covers online, ,a writer who attracts new business through his blog, a painter and the founders of an online comic bookstore. With help from this book, you can transform a simple idea into your very own online empire.

About This Book

You say you wouldn't know a merchant account, domain name or click-through if you sat next to one on a train? Don't worry: the Internet (and this book) levels the playing field, so a novice has almost as good a chance at succeeding as the MBA-clutching whiz kids you hear about.

The Internet is a vital part of what makes a business these days. Whether you've been in business for 20 years or 20 minutes, the keys to success are the same:

- **Having a good idea:** If you have something to sell that people have an appetite for, and if your competition is thin on the ground, your chances of success are good.
- **Working hard:** When you're your own boss, you can make yourself work harder than any of your former bosses ever could. If you put in the effort and persevere through the inevitable ups and downs, you'll come up smiling.
- **Preparing for success:** One of the most surprising and useful things we can discover from online businesspeople is that if you believe that you will succeed, you stand a much better chance of doing so. Believe in yourself and go about your plans like they're dead certs. Together with your good ideas and hard work, your confidence will pay off.

If you're the cautious type who wants to test the waters before you launch your new business on the Internet, let this book lead you gently over the learning curve. After you're online, you can master techniques to improve your presence. Even if you aren't among the lucky small business owners who make a fortune by connecting to the Net, the odds are very good that you'll make new friends, build your confidence and have fun too.