

Tech Savvy Teen



He's been running his own web business for three years and has clients all over Bahrain. Did I mention he hasn't even finished high school yet?

St Christopher's school student, Marc Steene, is not your typical teenager. He started his first business at the tender age of 12, a web design company called PURE24 design. In just three years his after-school hobby has grown into a profitable business with a portfolio of clients including St Christopher's School, an advertising agency and The Dilmun Club. And, there are plenty of potential clients eager to sign up and to utilise his special talent.

In the corner of a quiet coffee shop, Marc stares intently at his laptop, scrolling through reams of e-mails, taking the occasional sip of orange juice and looking away just long enough to glance down and check if any new messages have appeared on his mobile phone.

All the while, he's chatting to me about the intricacies of web design, rattling off terms that would sound alien to most.

As Internet entrepreneurs go, Marc, dressed in jeans and a blue striped shirt, perhaps doesn't seem all that unusual. But at 15, with only a matter of weeks to go before he sits his GCSEs, he's still really just a kid. Too young to vote, buy a drink, or even apply for a credit card, he's in the improbable position of running a promising business venture.

"Web design is easy," explains Marc. "The only hard bit is getting the information from the client. You have to make sure there is a good communication between you and the customer, otherwise it breaks down and it takes a lot longer than it should."

Marc's business is no accident. A small but growing contingent of tech-savvy teenagers just like him is making money online by turning their hobbies into profit-making businesses. In Marc's case, his business idea came after winning a web design competition at his school in the United Kingdom.

"I got my first taste of web design when we were given a class about it at my previous school in Dorset. I never actually expected to win the competition so, when I did, it made me realise that I could make some money out of it," says Marc.

For Marc, his business is just an extension of what he enjoys doing the most — interacting online. Never before have young people his age had the knowledge, access or tools to be able to rival adults. You don't need a degree, a glowing reference from an employer or even an appropriate form of ID; just hook yourself up to a computer and away you go. And with a lot more free time on their hands, these tech wizards spot business ideas that adults don't. Visit www.pure24design.com.

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