



# AutoResponders Explained

## The Basics of Autoresponders

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### Introduction

Autoresponders are specialized email addresses that send a previously written message or series of messages in response to an email sent to the autoresponder email address.

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The email address that you get from your ISP or Yahoo and the like don't have this function. The question you may be asking is where do autoresponder addresses come from, and who or what company provides the special function that makes an email address operate as an autoresponder?

### **Autoresponders Supplied by Your Website Host**

Virtually all paid web hosts and some free ones provide unlimited autoresponders as part of their hosting services. They are unlimited in number but usually limited in function such as, only one message with no follow-ups, no mail list capability, etc.

The autoresponder function is provided by software installed on the website host's server. An address which the web site owner declares as an autoresponder address, such as [ResponderName@YourDomain.com](#), where 'ResponderName' is the name you select for a particular autoresponder, is interpreted by the server as being an autoresponder address.

The server responds by sending out a message that has been pre-written for that autoresponder.

## **Autoresponder Software**

If you want more features than the website host's autoresponder can provide, one choice is to purchase autoresponder software.

Autoresponder software is available from several sources, and there are two main types. One is installed on the website host's server. The second is installed on the user's computer. Each has its advantages and disadvantages.

Software installed on the server may be complicated to install and require the services and expense of an installer, and may be limited to providing a single autoresponder address on that server. Server-based autoresponder software maintains the list of autoresponder addresses and is backed up with other web site files, taking that burden off the user. Additionally, the process of sending emails to a large list is handled by the server.

PC-based autoresponder software, however, is usually pretty easy to install, but requires the user to back up the list. Sending bulk

emails to the list may strain the capacity of the ISP, or may just exceed the allowable limit of bandwidth that the ISP allows.

PC-based software can provide the ability of enhancing the email list with other marketing programs on the PC which would be difficult or impossible with server installed software.

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### **Autoresponder Services Providers**

The autoresponder function is most often provided by autoresponder services, purchased from companies that host the function on their own servers.

The user accesses the functions over the internet and enjoys many advantages. None of the issues of installing software, being responsible for backing up the list or dealing with ISP bandwidth limitations apply when autoresponder services are used.

Autoresponder services are usually paid for by a monthly subscription fee, and may consist of any number of unlimited autoresponders.

A couple of the best paid autoresponder services are listed below:

[Aweber AutoResponders](#)

[Get Response AutoResponders](#)

### **What is the Best Autoresponder?**

There is no right or wrong answer. Your needs will be different than that of the next person. And which one you choose now, you may soon outgrow, as your business grows. Aside from the choice of autoresponder features, costs vary from free to quite expensive. You'll need to do a product comparison to determine which one fits your current and near future needs.

# Free Autoresponders

Email autoresponders are the most essential email marketing tool available to online businesses. But, as with any tool, users want to keep costs as low as possible.

With free autoresponders available, what would keep you from using them? To put it another way, how do you determine if you should use free email autoresponders and when, if at all, should you opt for autoresponder software or paid autoresponder services?

There was a time when the choices were somewhat simpler. If you were concerned about professional appearances, you wouldn't use a free service because it wouldn't look very professional.

As the free autoresponder services have improved though, that distinction isn't quite as obvious. Let's look at some of the issues involved.

## **Free Autoresponders That Your Website Host Provides**

When considering the countless ways you can use autoresponders, you should not ignore the one you probably already have. That is the 'unlimited' autoresponders usually supplied by your web host, if you have a web site. The address of these autoresponders will take the form of ResponderName@YourDomain.com, where 'ResponderName' is the name you create for a particular autoresponder.

They are unlimited in number, but limited in function. They usually only provide the basic autoresponder function of sending a reply to a message sent to the autoresponder address. No follow-up messages can be sent, usually no list of names is kept of those who queried the autoresponder, and consequently no method to send a message to all those who used your autoresponder. Thus, this autoresponder is limited to the simple function of sending out information on request. But there are lots of uses for it, nonetheless. Use it to send copies of articles, background information, reference information, FAQs, etc.

Being able to use your domain name in the autoresponder address can be a real advantage, and may be something you find impossible to do with some paid services.

### **Other Peoples' Ads in Your Messages**

A major reason not to use free autoresponders is the fact that most free services include an ad with every autoresponder message.

Having someone else's ad in your message is bad enough, and you may even find that your message carries an ad for a competing product. Some free autoresponders limit their advertising content to the free autoresponder service itself.

The more professional you want to appear, the less you want to be doing advertising for someone else, even if it is only the autoresponder company. But, depending on your needs, you may well choose a free autoresponder for some portion of your business.

It is unusual for a growing business to use only one autoresponder . You will probably find that your autoresponder needs change right along with your business. This means that a good free autoresponder may continue to fill a role in your business.

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Another good free autoresponder is FreeAutoBot

get it here: <http://FreeAutoBot.com>

## **The Newsletter Issue**

One of the major uses for an autoresponder or email list program with autoresponder functions is to publish and deliver an online newsletter.

Publishing a newsletter is a time-consuming process and you don't want to make it more so by choosing the wrong autoresponder. If you want to maintain a newsletter and send regular messages to your subscribers, you have imposed a major requirement on your choice of autoresponder.

If you want to send emails using HTML, you need to look for that feature. There are few free autoresponders that can meet even the minimum needs for distributing a newsletter but a few may be able to fill that role for you for a short period of time.

## **Think Ahead**

When deciding whether a free autoresponder will fit your needs, you need to think ahead and decide all you expect it to do.

Will it need to function as your newsletter list manager? How many sequential messages do you expect to send? Have you thought about how many total messages you might send in a week or month? Do you need to have your autoresponder track the response to the messages it sends?

These are just a few of the questions that you will need to answer to determine whether a free autoresponder will meet your needs or not.

## **Creative and Profitable Uses for AutoResponders**

An interested visitor who has been strolling through your site has finally come to just what she is looking for and is about to make a purchase. It's a sunny afternoon, and her cat, who happens to be sitting on the moss under the visitor's large fifty-year-old snow-rose bonsai tree, suddenly jumps down, and the priceless tree topples over.

In the blink of an eye, your visitor exits your site, and your sale is dust - unless you have had the foresight to utilize an autoresponder that has captured her email address. If you have installed an autoresponder, you can then follow-up with her, and in all probability, make the sale when the poor woman has finished repotting her precious bonsai.

Autoresponders are remarkable, versatile programs that do so much more than just automatically answer your email. Here are a few ideas that will help you to creatively and productively use your autoresponder to transform the casual visitor into a profitable customer.

Use your autoresponder to:

**1.** Publish a newsletter. Certain quality autoresponders will manage subscriptions and follow-up with interested prospects. Your newsletter can keep your visitors informed about your services or products, while building your reputation as a credible expert in your particular business.

**2.** Publish a newsletter only for your affiliates. Inform them of current sales you are running and of promotional material that your affiliates can use themselves to increase their commissions. Include tips, advice, and techniques that your affiliates can use to successfully go out and promote your business.

**3.** Write reviews. Cover books, software, music, e-books, movies, etc., and put each review in an autoresponder. Review your affiliate programs, using a link to your affiliate's page in your autoresponder.

4. Distribute your articles. Writing and distributing targeted articles is a powerful tool to build your business credibility, bring traffic to your site, and increase your sales potential. If your articles contain valuable information, many editors will print what is known as a resource box for you. A resource box contains your bio and a brief description of your service or product. It can also contain your autoresponder address. Let's say you've written fifty articles. Put them on separate autoresponder accounts and create a master list that contains the titles of each article, the autoresponder address, and a brief abstract. Then promote your master list. Additionally, include your publishing guidelines so your affiliates can add their articles to your list, increasing the number of writers who are represented in your article list.

5. Create mailing lists. Inform subscribers to your articles when you've written new ones that they may want to publish in their own newsletter or website.

6. Automate your sales process. Use an ad to insure

repeated exposure of your message, which has been proven to effectively increase sales. In your ad, put your autoresponder address where a visitor will be exposed to numerous marketing materials. This multiplies the chances of converting visitors into customers. For example, if you're selling a particular product, put testimonials about how spectacular it is on your autoresponder, and add a detailed, enticing description of your product.

**7.** Distribute advertising. Let's say you sell advertising on your website or in your newsletter or e-zine. Set your autoresponder to send the information about rates and how to place an ad automatically to all prospects' email addresses. Then have your autoresponder follow-up. It can also send notification of any special deals you are currently offering.

**8.** Distribute an email course. Each day, have your autoresponder send out another lesson. Just be sure that each lesson has quality content - not a sales pitch. Your content will do the selling for you, and will do it much

more effectively. You can include tips centered on a different topic for each lesson, illustrating how your product will benefit the reader. Include the tangible benefits the visitor will reap by purchasing your product. Make sure to include a paragraph or two at the end of each lesson enticing your prospect to consider making a purchase.

**9.** Automate a reminder about your service or product after a visitor has completed your course. This will increase the possibility of sales from visitors who have taken your course but are dragging their feet about actually making a purchase. You can also use these reminders to promote new products or services, and the products and services of your affiliate programs.

**10.** Distribute free reports. This gives your visitor an idea of the type of information you can provide and the quality of your product or service. Make sure these reports are not sales letters or you will more than likely lose a potential customer than gain a sale.

**11.** Create trivia quizzes on your site and place the answers in an autoresponder. Your visitor will then be motivated to request your autoresponder, and you will have a record of the visitors' email addresses who took your quiz. Or create a contest and have any visitors that enter send their responses to your autoresponder. Your autoresponder can be set-up to send them a confirmation of their entry.

**12.** Offer a trial version of your product. Give your prospects a sample of your ebook, course, software, membership, etc. People who are exposed to a little taste often end up wanting the whole pie. You can also capture their email addresses when you offer them a free trial from your website. Set up your autoresponder to give instructions on how to obtain their free trial, and then make sure to follow-up to try and close the sale.

**13.** Link to hidden pages on your autoresponder. For example, a hidden page could be your affiliate page that

contains graphics, promotional articles, and text links that interested affiliates can make use of. Inform visitors that they may have free access to your affiliate page by simply requesting your autoresponder. You will then gather a list of visitors who may be interested in becoming your affiliates.

**14.** Use an autoresponder on your order page. Post a request form for visitors to be notified of special offers or discounts in the future. This creates a very effective mailing list that contains the names of people who are already your customers.

**15.** Put your links page on your autoresponder. It should contain up to fifty links that would be of particular interest to your visitors. Make sure to add your own promotional copy at the top or bottom of this page.

Now that you have proof that autoresponders can be used creatively, see if you can come up with some brilliant ideas of your own!