

Amazon takes a few days to approve your application while taking a look at the content of your Web site, but you can begin building links and sending people to Amazon from your site right away.

Putting Out a Tip Jar

Depending on what kind of business or organization yours is, a tip-jar approach might be one way to solicit monetary contributions from your readers. Some blogs use these donation appeals for a short time to fund specific activities (a shortfall in Web hosting funds or to purchase a new piece of software), and others keep the links active all the time.

Of course, if you are Sears, keep in mind your customers likely won't feel compelled to drop money in a tip jar! This strategy works best for nonprofits, educational institutions, political campaigns, and other service-oriented organizations.

Quite a few online donation services target nonprofits directly, but two popular options for nonprofit and for-profit institutions are the Amazon Honor System and PayPal Donations. Any type of organization can use both to solicit donations for any purpose.

Little Green Footballs (www.littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog), an incredibly popular political blog run by Charles Johnson, appeals to visitors for donations using both PayPal and Amazon donation services. Figure 14-7 shows links to PayPal and Amazon.

Figure 14-7: Little Green Footballs has a donation link front and center on every page.

The screenshot shows the 'LGF web design > weblog' page. At the top left is the 'little green footballs' logo with a football icon. To the right is a search bar with 'Use: Google LGF' and an 'Advanced search' button. Below the logo is a circular badge that says 'washingtonpost.com Best BLOGS 2004 WINNER'. To the right of the badge is a text block: 'LGF T-shirts now on sale: Click here to fill out an order form you can print and mail with your payment, or pay online with PayPal. If you live outside the US/Canada, use this form instead.' Below this is another text block: 'Please help keep Little Green Footballs bouncing by donating whatever you can! We do this without pay, so the more donations, the more time we can afford to devote to LGF. Thanks for your support, and for helping make LGF a success.' Below that are two columns of text: 'Donate through Amazon. Donate through PayPal.' and 'If you'd like to mail a donation directly, instead of using Paypal or Amazon, email us and we'll reply with our Post Office Box address.' At the bottom left is a 'Visitors Online: 1,516 Today' counter. At the bottom center is a link: 'LGF's first conclusive entry about the CBS memo scandal. Dr. Joseph M. Newcomer's analysis.' On the right is a section titled 'now playing in iTunes' with a video player and a link: 'The Delivery Man Elvis Costello & The Impassioned The Scarlet Tide'.