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## Online cash flow McFarland teen makes money off Google ads

Lynn Welch — 11/15/2007 11:18 am

Chloe Spencer likes the color pink, cats, roller coasters and shopping at Abercrombie and Fitch.

And, like many teens, the McFarland High School sophomore has found a way to earn a little cash.

She blogs.

"Most people earn money by babysitting or working at places like McDonalds," said Spencer, 16, who has earned up to \$1,000 monthly from her site, [Neopetsfanatic.com](#). "I figured if I earned minimum wage I'd have to work 25 to 30 hours a week to make this."

Spencer is among those who have cashed in online, gaining traffic with search engine optimization and site ads via Google's AdSense.

With her dad's help, Spencer has monetized her site, earning cash that could help her buy a car and attend film school.

Chloe's dad, Stephan Spencer, is founder and president of [Netconcepts](#), a Madison consulting firm specializing in search engine optimization. He writes and speaks on e-marketing topics through various venues, including his own blog, [www.stephanspencer.com](#).

Stephan said he offered his daughter a few hours of advice to help her gain traffic, clicks and corresponding cash flow.

"My dad started talking about how you can make money off Google ads," recalled Chloe of her February 2006 launch. "At the time, I was obsessed with Neopets."

She created a blog appealing to fans of the popular virtual pet site, posting hints and tips on how to beat the game and gain points. She spends several hours a week working on the site.

Using tools including Google Suggest and WordTracker, Chloe chose the name of the blog and its categories. It became, "The Ultimate Neopets Cheats Site," which included the most popular Neopet search terms.

Within weeks, the site appeared on page one of a Google search for "neopets cheats." The site still appears in the top 10 in Google's search rankings for both Neopets and "neopets cheats."

High rankings help drive traffic to Spencer's site, which also drives up the profitability of click-throughs on content-relevant Google ads posted there. Chloe earns from 10 cents to a dollar each time a visitor clicks an ad on her site, or an average of about \$30 a day.

Chloe has also been marketing her site with the help of her dad. This past summer, she spoke at the [BlogHer](#) conference in Chicago and her story is featured on a number of Web sites, including [Blogger Stories](#).

A recent ABC News report said that Google paid \$3.1 billion to AdSense publishers last year. Google reported AdSense earnings of \$1.45 billion, 34 percent of total revenues, in the third quarter this year, up 40 percent over the same period last year.

Since launching AdSense in 2005, Google has been joined by Yahoo, Microsoft and, soon, MySpace and Facebook in offering site publishers contextual advertising.

Income that bloggers gain through these ad serving programs is difficult to gauge, said Vince Rose, who runs ads on [kiddogogo.com](#), a site he set up with his wife. It all depends on the site traffic, click-through rate and how much advertisers have bid for the keywords.



Mike DeVries

Teen blogger Chloe Spencer at her computer.

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Rose said the ads on his social networking site for families -- intended to share new kid-friendly places to go -- do not net a lot of money. The ad funds do help pay for Web hosting.

"The trend in general is that there are fewer and fewer barriers to post content online. People can set up a blog without it costing them anything and still try to monetize their site," Rose wrote in an e-mail. "The investment is just time then. If you're posting about a topic that is near and dear to your heart then it's a pretty small investment. Making any money would be icing for doing something you like to do."

Other sites, like Montreal-based [Weblo](#), offer members ad revenue through a number of vehicles, including Facebook profiles and digital assets.

"It's pennies at a time, but it ads up over the month depending on how much time you put into it," said Andrew Jackson, a Mayville resident and Weblo member.

Jackson stumbled on the site about six months ago, after selling his well-established Star Wars Galaxies account for \$2,000. Following this, he sought other ways to add value to his online activity.

"There are definitely ways out there people can make a few to a pile of bucks online," he said.

Chloe Spencer has launched other sites, a personal blog, [www.chloespencer.com](http://www.chloespencer.com) and, most recently, a teen quiz site, [www.quizfanatic.com](http://www.quizfanatic.com), offering "fun, girly quizzes" revealing information such as, "What Clothing Brand Suits You," and "How Boy Crazy are You?"

By the end of the year, she expects to incorporate ads to the quiz site.

[Lynn Welch](#) — 11/15/2007 11:18 am

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