

### **Magic Castle, Galactic Spaceship and WebFest Global - With Aaron Kvitek**

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<http://www.domainsherpa.com/aaron-kvitek-webfest-interview/>

Three messages before today's interview educates and motivates you.

First, if you're a domain name investor, don't you have unique legal needs that require domain name technical know-how and industry experience? That's why you need David Weslow of Wiley Rein. Go search for David Weslow on DomainSherpa, watch his interview and you can see for yourself that he can clearly explain issues, can help you with buy/sell agreements, deal with website content issues and UDRP actions, and even help you write your website terms and conditions. David Weslow is the lawyer to call for Internet legal issues. See for yourself at NewMediaIP.com.

Second, if you have questions about domain names, where should you go to ask them? The answer is DNForum.com. Not only is DN Forum the largest domain name forum in the world, but it's the best. You can learn about domain names and the industry, buy and sell domain names, talk about domain name news, and meet other domainers just like yourself. Register for a free DN Forum account and begin advancing your skills and knowledge today. And when you do signup, send me a friend request so we can connect.

Finally, whenever I'm thinking of buying or selling a domain name, the first place I go is Estibot.com. Their service provides quick and comprehensive information about the valuation and the critical factors that you need to know about -- like other extensions that are reserved, recent sales, search volume and cost-per-click rates on search engines. And if you haven't tried their lead generator service for domains you want to sell, you're missing one of the most powerful tools around. Those are the reasons I pay for the service. Give it a try.

Here's your program.

## DomainSherpa.com: The Domain Name Authority

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Michael Cyger: Hey everyone. My name is Michael Cyger, and I'm the Publisher of DomainSherpa.com - the website where you come to learn how to become a successful domain name entrepreneur and investor directly from the experts. ‘

Everyone knows that business is done between people; and having relationships with people gets deals done faster and more frequently. But what you may not realize is that the quickest way to build a business relationship is by sharing a meal or a drink. That is what I am going to be doing this coming February at the newly rebranded Web Fest Global Conference in Santa Monica, California.

Today we are joined by Aaron Kvitek, Vice President of Marketing and Communications at Oversee.net - the Company responsible for putting on the Web Fest Global Conference. Aaron, welcome to the show.

Aaron Kvitek: Thank you, Michael.

Michael: I mentioned, in my introduction, why I think it is so important to meet people in person. It is so easy for us, doing business on the Internet, to hide behind email and only interact with people on discussion forums. Do you have an example of an outcome from a past attendee of Web Fest that you can share with the audience?

Aaron: It is a great question. I think that you know, from your past experience at these conferences, Michael, that the attendees, by and large, will really place a premium on their confidentiality; and as a result, I cannot speak to specific deals that happened, but anecdotally, I can tell you, for example, after or during our last year's conference, there were several portfolio sales that occurred. As you mentioned, it is a result of people literally having a drink together and really getting to know one another and trust one another. And the conference is a great way to accomplish that goal. A couple of these portfolio deals were in mid-six figure level.

Michael: Wow.

Aaron: And also, there is kind of a fun little example that I like to tell people of a deal that may or may not have happened because I do not know exactly what transpired after the conference. But this interesting situation happened during the middle of the Pitch Fest Session. Pitch Fest, as you know, is a session where we have entrepreneurs get up on stage and give a three-minute pitch for their new or BETA stage business idea and we have a panel of very esteemed angel investor judges that give their opinions. But after one of these presenters gave their pitch, they sat down, just down the aisle from me, and they were approached by somebody who leaned over their shoulder and just briefly chatted with them. And I was kind of curious, so, after the session was over, I went up to this presenter and I said, "Out of curiosity, this gentleman who chatted with you right after your presentation, what did he have to say?" And the presenter said, "You know, the guy offered me two million dollars to get involved with my new business idea." And this is perfect. This is a great example of the type of people who come to our conference. They are looking to do deals. They are looking to be innovative. They are looking to push the envelope; and there is no better way to do it than literally face-to-face over drinks on the side, and our conference is the perfect opportunity for them.

Michael: Yeah, agreed. And for anybody that wants to get an idea what Pitch Fest is like, I TiVo a couple of shows that are on TV. One of them is called Shark Tank and the one up in Canada - the equivalent -, which started earlier is called Dragons' Den, where entrepreneurs get up and they pitch something for three minutes, and then they either get torn apart or they get a lot of people fighting over them to invest. And it is great. I love the shows. I tape every single one of them. And I love to come to Pitch Fest also, because you do have such an esteemed panel of investors up there that are providing some great input as well as potentially investing.

Aaron: And one of those panelists - one of those judges - is actually Chairman Emeritus of Tech Coast Angels. So, he is a heavyweight in the investing community, here in LA.

Michael: Definitely. So you have had six hundred plus attendees in past years of Domain Fest, which is the old name of Web Fest Global. Why have you changed the name to Web Fest Global for upcoming years?

Aaron: It is a great question. It really is a function of the evolving agenda over the last three or four years. We have tried to keep our finger on the pulse of the domain investors who are the heart and soul of our attendees. And it is no surprise that, over the years, they have been looking for other ways to monetize their traffic and also to, perhaps, cherry pick some of their premium domains, and figuring out ways to develop full scale businesses around these premium properties. And along with that, we decided that we would expand and evolve the content of Domain Fest by bringing in expert speakers, for example, and setting aside agenda topics in sessions that spoke about online marketing best practices from SEO to SEM to affiliate marketing to retargeting. And over the years, more and more of our agenda started to incorporate these types of sessions and speakers. And we started to attract not just speakers from outside the domain industry as a result, but also some attendees; and it became much more than just a conference about domaining. And we thought it was time to reflect that shift by renaming and rebranding the conference. We think that not only does it speak to the agenda evolving, but also we think it will open more doors for even more of these people from outside the domain industry to come and participate and contribute. We would like to think that new blood, new talent, and new money is going to make all of us more successful, and so we thought we would open the doors even wider than we have in the past to make that happen. So, that, in a nutshell, is why we renamed Domain Fest to Web Fest.

Michael: Makes sense. And you mentioned a number of learning topics that are going to take place at the event - search engine optimization, search engine marketing, and retargeting. What else can people expect to learn by attending this event in February?

Aaron: Well, one thing that we will never move away from is having a core portion of our agenda dedicated to domain investing related topics. So, a great example of that is a session that we will be hosting on new GTLDs. Trying to give people in the audience a sense for how they can predict the winners and the losers. Clearly, this is a very hotly debated topic. Will this be a resurgence in domain investing and organic direct navigation traffic with all these new TLDs? Where should people place their bets? Where will brand managers be placing their bets? So, there is a lot of debate; a lot of discussion around this topic, and we are having a great panel discussion that hopefully

will answer some questions. And as a twist, we are actually also including an expert on the panel by the name of Andrew Snow. And you may be familiar with him. He is a longtime IBM domain investor and he is going to provide that additional perspective of the IBM new generic TLDs. So, we are really going to be covering it from A to Z, and we hope that people walk away with better information to plan their strategies for 2013 and beyond, as these new TLDs start getting rolled out. So, that is one example. Certainly, in the domain side, we will be talking about alternative monetization. It is always a hot topic, and we are bringing in a couple of panelists that we hope will encourage domain investors who are considering or in the midst of developing properties to put together the right pieces - the right business model - to earn the most revenue from these build out scenarios. We have another workshop that we will be using to talk about how to assess the right value of a domain name; and there is a gentleman already signed up to be a panelist named Andrew Rosener. And I think you know him, Michael. You have had him, I think, on your show before. And we are expecting to have additional panelists participate in that conversation as well. And that should help people out there from beginning domainers to potentially even the advanced domainers understand a little bit more of the quantitative and qualitative elements that need to be factored into how to assess value for a domain name from both, the end user perspective as well as from the domain investor perspective. We have another kind of category of sessions, and I may not take the time now to dive into them, but we have a category, as you alluded to, in online marketing. Certainly, the SEO, the SEM, and the affiliate marketing. We traditionally had been holding those sessions and we will continue to incorporate them in our agenda. As I mentioned, this is a great opportunity for people to get some real cut-to-the-chase tips and insights into a lot of these important areas for how to develop and build out your online businesses. And it is not just for domain investors. We get eCommerce entrepreneurs and small business owners. We get a lot of these folks who come to our conference specifically because they do want to brush up and move forward down the learning curve in a lot of these important elements of running an online business.

And then, something that is kind of new this year is we are adding additional content and sessions around mobile. Mobile is obviously a real hot topic; and we are certainly aware of that. The amount of not only direct

navigation traffic going to mobile is growing, but any online business is seeing added growth in the traffic coming from mobile devices. So, we have added a couple of additional panels around mobile. A panel that will talk about mobile advertising trends. A panel that will talk about how to design your mobile app. And a panel that will be near and dear to a lot of people's hearts, which is kind of like a mobile SEO panel. So, how to acquire traffic on little or no budget?

Michael: Nice.

Aaron: So, I think that there is going to be a good deal of diversity here that will appeal to a wide range of people. But the common thread - the common denominator - is these sessions are designed for people that really want to move their businesses forward and they want to hit hard and hit fast on their learning curve to make that happen.

Michael: Yeah, and that is great. Last year, when I attended Domain Fest, I do not think that the word 'responsive' was even the vocabulary of theme designers and website developers and affiliate marketers having a responsive theme that caters to one theme that will display properly for desktop, for tablets, and for mobile. And this year that seems like every single theme and template that comes out is responsive. So, being able to stay up to date on the technology and tools that are going to help you run your business more effectively, I think, are very important. And I will just say you mentioned a ton of great named. I have had Andrew Rosener on the show before, talking about what I dubbed 'The Rosener Equation' for valuation. He has come back six to twelve months later and talked about how he is modifying the formula further based on the current market; and I am sure he will do the exact same thing when he attends Web Fest in February because there is going to be some changes that, in fact, happen to the valuation formula. And I looked at your program. You have Braden Pollock. You have Zappy Zapolin. Great people who I have also had as Domain Sherpas. And so, if you are thinking about attending any of those sessions, watch their interview on Domain Sherpa, write down your questions, and show up in person. These guys are so nice. They will buy you a drink and they will answer all your questions. Of course the drinks are free from you, Aaron, right?



Aaron: Drinks are on us.

Michael: And anybody that is thinking that you cannot meet somebody new at these events, last year you had, I believe, Danny Sullivan speak at your event - the noted search engine optimization guru.

Aaron: Absolutely.

Michael: He seems like BFFs with Matt Cutts over at Google. He always has Matt show up to his events. I met Danny at one of your post-function events. I said, "Danny, I run Domain Sherpa. You have never heard of me before, but I want you to come on the show and talk about domain names and search engine optimizations," and he did.

Aaron: Yeah.

Michael: And it is that easy. Just striking up a conversation with people after events.

Aaron: So, Michael, there is a great example, where, at a larger conference, you may not have had the opportunity to have that drink with Danny Sullivan. It is interesting. We have actually had Danny attending our conference as a panelist or speaker for, I think, four years in a row now and side by side with him has been Bruce Clay, who you may know is also an icon in the SEO world going way back.

Michael: I do.

Aaron: This year we are bringing back another panelist that is in the SEO expertise area; and that is Joanna Lord from SEOMoz. So, we are really excited about the non-domain related speakers as well. And Tim Ash is another one. He was almost our top rated speaker last year at Domain Fest, and he is coming back to run a workshop. A little bit more hands-on than last year. And he is actually asking people who are registered attendees to submit their URL for their landing page that they would like him to review live on the stage during his particular workshop. And we think it is going to be a ton of fun. He is very high energy, as you may recall from last year.

Michael: I do.

Aaron: And very, very smart.

Michael: Yes, very useful. I remember walking away with at least a page of notes from listening to Tim Ash last year. And I probably did not take advantage of like most of them, so I am going to do it again this year and I am going to make the resolution that, when I get back to my office, I am going to execute on more of the notes that I take. All right. So, I love all the learning stuff, but I also love some of the social stuff; and you guys have some of the best parties. Two years ago, I had a fantastic time at the Playboy Mansion. I know a lot of people did not, but I had a great time. Well, I think everybody had a great time at the Mansion.

Aaron: Everybody had a great time at the Mansion.

Michael: It was after the event, which I had a great time. I took pictures. Oh, my friends are so jealous. You know I have attended the event the past two years. What can I look forward to in the upcoming year? What kind of social events are we having?

Aaron: Yeah, we have got a great lineup this year. And it is something that we take a great deal of pride in. We really try to make the entire conference from A to Z top quality from the networking to the speakers to the venue; and the evening parties are part of that as well. So, this year, we are continuing the tradition of really trying to find those unique experiences. And really, part of the reason we put so much time and money into it is because this is part of that relationship building that you mentioned at the outset. You mentioned that you shook hands and had a drink with Danny Sullivan and it translated into a really nice opportunity for you to get some content and some advice for the people in our community. It happens at these evening events; and when there is a great quality event, and people are really enjoying it, and they are in a great mood, it facilitates that relationship building and deal making. So, this year, what we have lined up. On the first evening, our Opening Night Dinner Reception is going to be about four blocks down the street from the Fairmont Hotel at two brand new restaurants that are literally interconnected and they



are part of the new redesigned Santa Monica Place Mall. It is kind of an outdoor open-air mall. Very beautiful. And these restaurants overlook the Santa Monica Promenade and, you may recall, it is just a great place to people watch, and great shops, and so forth. So, that is going to be Opening Night Reception. We actually purposely booked both restaurants because we wanted the additional space for people to spread out, find a table to sit down, enjoy good food, have a drink, and have a little bit more privacy to have those kind of conversations that we know are important to people.

Michael: Nice.

Aaron: The second night we are really excited to be going to, actually, the California Science Center. And at the California Science Center, they are now hosting an exhibit of the Space Shuttle Endeavor. And I actually went there the other day and got to do a walkthrough with the Program Director there, and it is just amazing. I mean you walk in and there is the space shuttle literally almost within hands reach; just high enough that you cannot touch it unless you are a basketball player. And it is just phenomenal. We are going to have dinner literally under the space shuttle. What is also exciting about this evening is that we are hiring and bringing in a former NASA Astronaut who actually flew the Space Shuttle Endeavor on two missions and another shuttle on a different mission, and he is going to be bringing some artifacts from some of his missions. He is going to be sitting in the corner and answering questions. I have heard he is a very gregarious character and just has wonderful stories, so we think that is going to add a nice dimension to the evening for people who are really curious about this.

Michael: Nice. Just before we hit the record button on the interview, we were talking about the Endeavor moving through LA. And my family is down there and they told me: "Hey, you got to watch this." And I went online and I actually watched a four-minute sped up version of the entire move through LA to its final resting place at the California Science Center. And it is phenomenal how they moved this massive space shuttle through these small residential streets.

Aaron: Right.

Michael: Moving it around poles and trees, and moving it down below wires. Just unbelievable. I am going to include a link to that underneath the video just so people can watch how it got to its final resting place. And if you attend the event, what it will feel like to be underneath this massive space shuttle.

Aaron: Yeah, I have a similar story. When the space shuttle was flying laps around Downtown LA, everybody in our office was literally running from one corner of the building to the other. We are actually in a very high office building on the 43rd and 44th Floor. And as we were looking out, I actually looked down at the smaller buildings around us, and every single building had their roof packed with people who were running from side to side with their little cameras. And I kind of had a laugh because some of them had like their little smartphones taking pictures and I knew those pictures were not going to come out. It was the guys with the long telephoto lenses. They were going to get good shots.

Michael: Yeah.

Aaron: But I think it just talks about the star power of this space shuttle. And people who come in from overseas or from other parts of the US, where they do not have access to this type of a party, wow, it is going to be a real once in a lifetime opportunity and pictures are going to be taken in droves and posted on social media. We are excited about that middle Wednesday night party.

Michael: Yeah, and I heard that you are going to allow me to actually get into the space shuttle and sit behind the driving wheel. I do not even know.

Aaron: Yeah, okay. We will talk about that offline, Michael. I am not quite sure.

Michael: All right, Aaron, we will work something out on that. So, the next night, you have got another party.

Aaron: This is another one of these very rare opportunities. We are going to be taking everybody to the Magic Castle in Hollywood. This is actually a private membership club and it is pretty much the only one in the country that

is like this. The thing that makes it special is not only because it is private membership club and it is the only one in the States, but it literally is a personal experience with magic. So, as you are walking around, these famous magicians are going to bump into and say: "Hey, how would you like to see a trick?" And they are literally going to be right in front of you, running these magic tricks, and you are going to be amazed. There are also a variety of different small and medium sized rooms, where they will actually do miniature stage performances as well.

Michael: Wow.

Aaron: So, it is going to be just a wonderful evening. Again, because it is membership only, even if you are in LA, chances are you are not going to be able to get in, let alone if you are from elsewhere in country or from overseas, where they do not have anything like this at all anyway. So, we really think this is going to be another one of those marquee farewell parties that Domain Sponsor is famous for hosting and I think everyone is going to really enjoy this.

Michael: Yeah, I grew up in LA. I have never heard of the Magic Castle, so I went on to Wikipedia to take a look at it. I thought it was like maybe some club associated with Disney Land or something, and it is not. It is actually like a chateau-esque castle that only has magicians that are a part of it. And I read on Wikipedia that you have to come in through the front door; and I am not sure if we are coming in through the front door or not, but you enter this lobby and there is no doors or anything around the lobby. And so, you enter in and somebody has to like whisper some secret command to an owl in order to get the doors to open. I cannot wait to find out what you have in store at the Magic Castle.

Aaron: It almost like taking a step back in time. The decor there is reminiscent of I would say like the Roaring Twenties. It is heavy. It is big. It is bold. It is dark and mysterious. And they have winding staircases and hidden rooms. It is a lot of fun.

Michael: Yeah, sounds like it. So, it was almost a year ago. It was at your, then, Domain Fest Conference that Oversee announced the sale of Moniker

and SnapNames to KeyDrive S.A. Are you expecting any big announcements at this year's event?

Aaron: From Overseer?

Michael: Yes.

Aaron: No, I am not expecting any big announcements. No.

Michael: All right. And you are going to have an auction going on at the event. As of the date of the recording of this show, the auction names have not been announced, but they will be posted and we will include a link to Moniker that is going to running the auction. Anything else about the auction that you want to share?

Aaron: Maybe two important points. One is that the live auction at the Conference will actually be available to people who want to watch or bid online simultaneously as the auction is occurring; and that is based on the SnapNames technology that was developed several years ago. And also, the other point I would like to mention is that they are having an online only auction of domain names that actually starts on the Tuesday of the Conference and runs for a full a month. And this is where people can take their time. They can take a look at the wider selection of inventory and make their purchase decisions accordingly.

Michael: Excellent. And I had a note here also. I saw that you are, again, having the Women in Domaining Event. Is that correct?

Aaron: That is correct, yet.

Michael: And what is the purpose of that event?

Aaron: Well, this was started a few years ago. Coincidentally, you mentioned the Playboy Mansion; and it happened, I think, the first or second year. It might have been the second year of the three years that we went to the Playboy Mansion. And the women wanted to get together and have their own little event before the Mansion, and so we worked with Moniker and

SnapNames to actually host that event; and they loved it. They had fun and then they all jumped on the last buses to the Playboy Mansion as a group. So, it really kind of picked up steam. And I think you will probably not be surprised that the majority of people attending our conferences are male, and the female at the conference are using this as an opportunity to facilitate their own networking. And so, it is being essentially hosted by Moniker, and there is a link on our website in our Agenda Page for details on the event and also, it will list some of the people - some of the companies - who are also helping to fund and sponsor this little reception prior to the Magic Castle evening.

Michael: Excellent. All right, here is the final question, Aaron. What advice do you have for someone that is sitting on the fence about attending the event? They are not sure if they want to go. It sounds pretty good. What can you say to push them over the fence?

Aaron: That is a great question. When I am asked that question, I like to point out a fact that some people overlook. The fact of the matter is that if you were to go to any of the other large conferences out there that offer similar content - think of SMX, the SES, the Ad Techs, the Affiliate Summit Shows -, all of them are excellent shows with excellent content, but they are really big. And we offer very similar content. The same high quality speakers. It is a bit more compact. It is a bit more straight-to-the-punch, but it is a lot smaller. Our conference, as you mentioned, the outset average is close to six hundred and fifty attendees from twenty-five plus countries. Unlike those other conferences, with this number of attendees, you have an opportunity to literally shake hands, have dinner, and have a drink with these expert speakers. We have a Dine With an Expert Program, where you can sign up to have breakfast and lunch with participating speakers. But even after sessions, you can literally walk up to them during the break, after a session, shake their hands, and exchange business cards, and ask them a question or two. You are not going to generally get that opportunity at a lot of these larger conferences. So, I like to tell people if you really need to meet some of these experts, shake hands, and get some free advice, this is a great conference to go to for that. In addition, it is also a great conference for networking. Again, the larger shows are really big, and you are running around, and you are hitting a bunch of other people. You are visiting a lot of different booths. You are talking with a lot of different sponsors. And sometimes it is hard to really

form that extra measure of relationship that really translates into something helpful. And because of the size of our conference, that can happen. We have great exhibitors. We have great sponsors. These are people offering cutting edge services in a variety of different areas. And you can actually form these relationships and dig in a little bit deeper because it is not a massive huge conference. So, I would encourage people who are sitting on the fence. Think about where you get the most bang for your buck. If you are picking a conference or two to go to in 2013, think about where you are going to get that real traction that you are looking for - the take home tips, the handful of business cards that actually can turn into something meaningful. And obviously I am biased, but my suggestion is that Web Fest Global is one of those conferences that should be on your short list.

Michael: Yeah, and I will throw out one more reason that we have not discussed yet; is that the hotel is beautiful and it is right on the beach. And every single morning last year, I got up and I went for a run right along the beach, and I loved it. And if anybody is a slow runner/fast jogger and they want to join me, they can shoot me an email at Michael@DomainSherpa.com. I am happy to go running with you in the morning. Meet you, chat about business, introduce you to people that I may know at the conference, and give you one more reason to attend.

Aaron: Wonderful.

Michael: If you have a follow-up question, please post it in the comments below, and we will ask Aaron to come back and answer as many as he can. If you would like to follow Web Fest and this Conference, you can do so on Twitter at @WebFestGlobal. And they also have a Facebook account. WebFestGlobal on Facebook.

Aaron: We are also active on Twitter and Facebook at DomainFest as well.

Michael: You are also. Which one do you prefer?

Aaron: At this point, because we have so many followers on DomainFest, we are really moving more with that channel. And obviously we are hoping to migrate people over to WebFestGlobal, but currently, we have all these



followers on DomainFest on Twitter as well as Facebook. So, we will continue pushing those channels, but also trying to build our other WebFestGlobal media as well.

Michael: Sounds great.

Aaron Kvitek, Vice President of Marketing and Communications at Oversee.net. Thanks for coming on the show and sharing exclusive details on your upcoming Web Fest Global Conference. I am looking forward to seeing you in February at the event.

Aaron: Michael, it was a real pleasure chatting with you. Thank you very much and I am happy to answer any further questions.

Michael: Thank you all for watching. We'll see you next time.

**Watch the full video at:**

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