

Make those goals, book a world holiday

Set yourself up in business and prepare for retirement. It's been done by a 31-year-old in a year, writes **Anita Moran**.

Serena Star-Leonard is preparing to take three years off to travel the world.

The Kiwi has been living and working in Australia and 18 months ago she set herself the goal to retire in a year.

The 31-year-old isn't ready to give up working completely but is in a position to do what she wants, when she wants.

Ms Star-Leonard was working in IT and was also a business coach. She decided to turn her passion for websites into a thriving business which could support her financially.

"I found that many common problems my clients faced were around their websites."

"In fact, for many of them, getting results from their website was like traversing a glacier blindfolded," she said.

"I lucked upon the perfect business partner and Grassroots Internet Strategy was born."

"A website packed full of great information, courses and resources designed to help any small business owner understand what they need to know to have more success online."

Ms Star-Leonard said her aim grew out of the website she had created.

"A fresh website project was a great opportunity to put all that we knew into practise and I decided to take on a personal challenge to blog the progress of the website," she said.

"I decided that if I was going to do a lot of work to create a new business I was going to make it worth my while and aim to create a sustainable low maintenance income over 12 months."

Tips to retire young

- Set yourself a goal and give yourself a timeframe
- Be patient. People expect things to happen quickly but it takes a lot of effort
- Be Persistent. Don't give up on your goal.
- Have an open mind. Be willing to try new things
- Do what you are passionate about, you are more likely to succeed.

Ms Star-Leonard wrote a weekly blog about her experiences and was later approached to write a book.

"It is about my experiences and tips on creating a sustainable business which is low maintenance."

She said the key was for people to tap into web-based businesses and do something which they are passionate about.

"You don't have to have a lot of capital," she said.

"You can start a business for \$50 and build it up. Find a service or something which you are good at and use that as the base."

Ms Star-Leonard said now all she needed was internet access a few days a month to maintain her business.

"I have the freedom to do what I want," she said.

"I can go travelling for three years or do charity work and I don't have to worry about how I am going to pay the bills."



FEET UP: Serena Star-Leonard can retire after creating a low maintenance web-based business.

PHOTO: ANDREW WARNER 110511AW1

5 TOP GADGETS



CHEF'N BANANA SLICER: \$19.99. If you've got a hankering for sliced banana but have neither the time nor the temperament to do a decent job, step aside and let the Chef'n Banana Slicer weave its magic. Just peel a banana, load it up and ca-chunk! A diced, tasty snack in record time with no mess. Available from Stevens.



PORTABLE SPEAKER SYSTEM V3: \$99.98. Just because you're out in the woods doesn't mean you can't take your beats with you. Small, light and great to travel with, this portable speaker system is an ideal way to take your music on the move. It has an aluminium housing, high-clarity speakers and can be connected to a range of audio devices from MP3 players to mobile phones. Available from Kathmandu.



SERIES 6 LED TV: by Samsung, 40-inch \$2499.95, 46-inch \$3199.95, 55-inch \$3999.95, 60-inch (TBC). These days, televisions can do a whole heap more than deliver the latest episode of *Shortland Street*. Take Samsung's Series 6 LED TV, not only packing high definition 2D and 3D visuals with dynamic sound. It also has heightened Wi-Fi, a web browser and a range of apps, pretty much the only thing it doesn't do is gossip with you about the latest betrayals on your favourite soap opera.



TINY LOVE CLASSIC DEVELOPMENT MOBILE: \$104.99. Colourful characters and soothing classical music combine to provide one of the most fun ways to entertain bubs. The Tiny Love Classic Development Mobile also packs a night-light, a unique 4-way motion and spiral shapes to help babies sharpen their eyesight... and it's cute as a button, too. Available from babyuniverse.co.nz



SINGING JUSTIN BIEBER DOLLS: \$59.99. If you like your singing sensations young, Canadian and with a peculiar haircut — then the Singing Justin Bieber Doll will be right up your alley. The plastic version of the pint-sized performer sings his hits *Somebody to Love* and *One Time*, and comes with a variety of tiny stage props. Available from Farmers.

GAME ON Hard-gore gambol with portal Kombat

Mortal Kombat (R18)
Publisher: Warner Bros.
Interactive Entertainment
Platforms: PlayStation 3, Xbox 360

★★★★★

It's been a long time between fatalities, but the latest incarnation of fighting game *Mortal Kombat* has proven to be well worth the wait.

There have been many sequels to this gory game, of varying quality, but the developers have gone back to what made this game so successful in the first place — classic characters delivering exceptional beat downs.

The game play is classic *Kombat* — with a sweet mix of ranged attacks, teleporting and getting up close and personal. Most importantly, there are a fresh batch of fatalities — and what a smorgasbord of over-the-top ultra-violence they are. Being a family paper slows me down in their description but if it can be sliced, diced, electrocuted, sometimes sliced again or pulverised — the odds are pretty good that it will be. A huge range of characters, compelling story mode feature, online play and a huge range of single player challenges give *Mortal Kombat* a mind-bogglingly massive range of content. You'll be harpooning, uppercutting and teleporting until your thumbs are numb and twisted.



"You'll be harpooning, uppercutting and teleporting until your thumbs are numb and twisted."

Gameplay can be either challenging or easy — great for button mashing with your mates but also with layers of complexity to satisfy any aspiring *Kombat* master. Excellently detailed characters and gritty battle damage all contribute towards drawing you into the fun. This latest version of *Mortal Kombat* is a superb return to form.

— Lindsay Harvey

WEBSITE



Madhattery.royalroundup.com

Depending on who you ask, the royal wedding was either a rampage of ridiculous hats or a divine showcase of heavenly headwear.

If you fall into the latter category, then madhattery is the site for you.

"American royal-watcher and Anglophile" Ella Kay has set out to provide a fascinating and often hilarious look at the royals... and their outrageous pieces of headwear.

Along with the English royal family, Ella covers other nobles around the globe in her quest to find the most ridiculous, captivating and beautiful pieces.

Fans of Ella Kay and the royals can also get a taste of her witty writing on her three other royal-themed sites.

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