

# Digital Bytes

Low to no-cost digital marketing best practices to help you grow your business

## Two Free Game-Changers: Bitly and Canva

### What

There is no shortage of amazing online tech available to help you run your business, many at low or no cost. Here are two favorites that can help you easily measure the results of your marketing efforts and create more dynamic graphics.

### Bitly.com

Bitly converts your long, scary-looking URL links with lots of symbols and characters to a short-form link. When you enter this new link into a browser, it automatically directs the user to the original online destination. Short-form links became popular with Twitter because it reduced the number of characters in a tweet. But short-form links can also help you in gathering performance data on your marketing campaigns.

### Why

Let's say, for example, you are having a sale and using Facebook, Instagram and email to promote it. Your goal is to drive traffic to your website for additional information on the sale or to download a coupon. Using social media insights and your email provider's dashboard, you're able to track views and opens. If you're using Google Analytics, you can even track your overall website traffic.

But what you don't know is *which* platform is driving the traffic.

Using Bitly, you can create a different short form link to use in each social media platform and in your email blast.

### How

Open a free account at Bitly.com and click "Create." Enter your desired URL (in this case, your website) and it automatically converts to a short-form Bitly link which will look something like this: bit.ly/32C8sfT. You can leave it as is or you have the option to customize the back end of the link so that it's more memorable. For example, if you were using it on Facebook, you could shorten it to bit.ly/saleFB. Go ahead and create another link for Instagram and your email blast and use the respective links in your promotion.

Then, use Bitly's dashboard to track not only the total number of link clicks, including day and time, but also the number of link clicks by platform because each has its own unique Bitly link. This will give you great insight as to which platforms are driving the most traffic. Great data. All free

## Canva.com

Canva promotes itself as a graphics platform for non-designers. It is free (there's a paid version if you want to access a greater variety of templates and fonts) and contains templates for making everything from invitations and flyers to brochures and social media posts, which you can customize with your own messages, colors, etc.

The site even offers a photo editing tool, a video maker/editor and a large variety of stock photos, design elements and type fonts – all free.

## Why

Professional graphics are an integral part of your brand and every post, flyer or business card should reflect it. Even the “help wanted” sign you hang on your door should be on brand. If design isn't your strong suit, Canva can help even the most graphically challenged among us create vibrant graphics and scroll-stopping posts.

## How

Sign up for your free account and go directly to Canva's free design course at <https://designschool.canva.com/> or tune into anyone of the many tutorials available on YouTube.

Word to the wise: Canva does take some time to learn and to practice, so allot some time to get comfortable with the platform. The payoff is that once you're proficient, great graphics will take, quite literally, minutes to create!

The site operates using drag and drop technology, allowing you to customize their templates with stock graphics or you can upload your own. As an added benefit, the site stores all your designs in one place so they're readily available for use or modification.

Canva offers graphics for every conceivable type of holiday and event you can use with very little work. When you're ready, you can create your own designs from scratch thanks to tutorials on using font combinations, creating color palettes and lots of design ideas.

The platform is extremely robust and it's up to you how much or how little of its features you use. Either way, with a little patience and practice, even the most basic, free features on Canva can help you level up your graphics program exponentially.