eBook Farming
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Email

Recommended Resources

Web Site Hosting Service

Internet Marketing

Affiliate Program

Contents

1. Introduction

Welcome, and thank you for buying eBook Farming: How To Grow Money Selling Your Words and Ideas.

No stone has been left unturned in preparing this eBook. This is a definitive guide to making real money or driving real traffic to your web site by creating your own eBooks. How much money or how much traffic depends on your ideas and devotion. You should be excited right now! The keys to wealth and traffic building opportunities described in these pages are just waiting for you to tap into them.

This guide even teaches you basic web site design and marketing principles so you can create a mini-site optimized just to sell your eBook information product.

Most of this guide will refer to selling your eBook. If your goal is to drive traffic to your site by giving away your eBook, you'd still create the same quality product by applying the same principles described to sell an eBook to giving one away.

Because subjects like this can be very dry, I have attempted to insert a little of my offbeat sense of humor into this guide. I believe a few laughs at unexpected moments make it easier to learn, and make learning more enjoyable.

However, because I'm a bit of a comic by nature, don't let that distract you from the usefulness and seriousness of this guide.

While this eBook mostly refers to creating instructional "how-to" style eBooks (there's more money in that), bear in mind you can also publish works of fiction, poetry, and other types of literature. Anything that is paper published can be electronically published. Unless you have an established name, works of fiction,

short stories, poetry, and other genres will sell for far less money. Although, at a lower price you may sell more to make up the difference.

This guide assumes no prior knowledge on your part, so let's begin at the beginning.

2. What is an eBook?

What you're reading is an example of an eBook. An eBook, some times spelled e-book, Ebook, or ebook, is short for Electronic Book. It is a way to present information in an organized and hierarchical manner like a real book, only in digital format.

Many eBooks are first designed as HTML pages (a web site) designed to look similar to a book in its layout. Special software called compilers are used to turn it into an executable (.exe) file. The advantage to this type of eBook is that most people already have the software installed (usually Internet Explorer) that they need to be able to view it.

Another often used format is an Adobe Portable Document File, or a PDF file for short. A PDF file requires the user to have the free Adobe Acrobat Reader installed to be able to view it. The Acrobat Reader is installed on many computers, but if you choose to make your eBook in this format, you'd be wise to provide a link to Adobe where customers can download the free Acrobat Reader software.

Of course, you can do as I did with this eBook and make it available in both formats to make it accessible to as many people as possible in the format they prefer.

A word of caution, some people have a strong dislike for PDF documents, and may consider not buying your product if that's the only format it's available in. The advantage to the PDF format is that it often prints nicer, but allowing them to print your eBook may not be an option you want to include. The nature of your content would determine if you want to allow printing or not. It does make it easier for content thieves to steal your content.

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There are other formats as well, but these two are the most common. We'll discuss the software needed and other eBook creation options that are available in more depth later.

Depending on the software used, restrictions can be built into an eBook such as disabling the right click menu, disabling copy and paste so no one can easily steal your content, and all or part of it can be password protected.

3. Why You Should Start NOW

Let's face it. The Internet has been a big giveaway. People are used to finding practically anything they want for free. Free software, free information, free hosting, free email, free this, free that, Free Willy - it's been a whale of a giveaway.

A funny thing happened on the way to the bank. Thousands of web sites learned they couldn't pay their bills by giving away the store once the ad revenue dried up.

Dotbomb became nearly as common of an expression as dotcom. Search engines started charging just to look at your site with no guarantee they would list it, thousands of people earning terrific salaries were thrown out of work as venture capital ran out and web sites folded, and now, many of the things that used to be free are for a fee.

This pay for content trend will continue. Site owners are learning that their most valuable commodity is their content and services, not the sell-ad-space model half the Internet was fashioned after.

You can still find almost any information you want for free, but that may not last. Many sites are now charging for things they used to offer for free, and cash poor sites are watching them closely as they consider making the changeover to pay for content.

Procrastination is opportunity's natural assassin.
- Victor Kiam

There may be a day when it becomes very difficult to conduct authoritative research without paying a fee, perhaps several fees to several sources. That day may arrive sooner than many expect. As the changing tide away from the free model to the pay model reaches critical mass, we'll see an accelerated conversion rate from free to pay for content sites.

But do we really need to research? As much as we'd like to think we know enough, most of us need to research any topic we write about. We know we'll get fresh ideas and make discoveries that will enhance our products and make them more valuable to the consumer and more profitable for us.

Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance.
- Confucius

Now is the time to get started while you can still find most of the information for free that you need to round out your knowledge and create your eBook information product. If you wait too long, your profit margin may decline because of research costs.

Add that to the trend of search engines charging for submitting your site and it's a double whammy for waiting. You may have to pay more gathering the information in and you will have to pay more to disseminate the information if you use search engines to help your product to be found. Ouch.

There is one more compelling reason to start now. Selling and giving away free eBooks has been around since about 1995 or 1996, yet, it's still not considered a mainstream marketing activity by most businesses and individuals.

There is confusion about why to make one, how to make one, who can make one, and what they can do for you. For the major income and traffic building opportunity that eBooks represent, it's still a fairly well kept secret. But that won't last forever!

Getting in now before it becomes too crowded will help establish you as an eBook marketer while potential competitors are still wet behind the ears. Being there before your competitors has great merit. In blind taste tests, a majority of people prefer Pepsi over Coke. This is a mystery to me because I prefer Coke, but what is important is that Coke outsells Pepsi. Why? They were the first Cola. Pepsi has been playing catch-up since day one. Let others play catch up to you when it comes to eBook publishing, rather than the other way around.

As more and more people get into eBook creation, there will be many products released that are lacking in quality. This will jade the consumer's opinion of the overall value of eBooks. Being established as a quality eBook seller before that happens will buffer you against the skepticism that naturally results from a field flooded with poor product offerings.

4. When Isn't Research Copyright Infringement?

Aspiring writers often wonder if research is copyright infringement. It would be if you plagiarize someone else's words, but it doesn't have to be. Everyone researches for information because no one knows it all. All writers, the president of a publishing company once told me, borrow ideas from each other. I don't know if that's true or not for all writers, but I do believe it's true for the overwhelming majority of writers.

Most of us don't invent ideas. We take the best ideas from someone else.
- Sam Walton (Walmart founder)

Let me clarify this point one more time, I'm not saying you can use other writer's words! You can't, period. That would be copyright infringement. You can take their ideas and think about them, use them as kindling to ignite your own thoughts, and write about your thoughts and ideas in your own words.

That is the essence of research and writing, but bear in mind you must substantially change (read that as "completely change" to be safe) the words you use to express your thoughts from the words others have used to express their thoughts, or you are open to a copyright infringement lawsuit.

5. Five Myths About Intellectual Property Copyrights

Myth 1: If it doesn't have a copyright notice, it's free to use.
Fact: This was true at one time, but today most nations abide by the Berne copyright convention. Original works created after 1989 are copyrighted whether a notice is provided or not. This applies to web sites too. Once a web site is published (placed online) it has copyright protection.

Myth 2: If I make up my own story based on someone else's story, the new story copyrights belongs to me.

Fact: These kinds of works are called derivative works. If you write a story using settings or characters from someone else's work, you need that author's permission. The lone exception is for parody.

Myth 3: Copyright violation isn't a serious offense.

Fact: In the United States, a commercial copyright violation involving more than 10 copies or over $2,500 is a felony.

Myth 4: If I don't charge for it, it's not against the law to use it.

Fact: If you charge for it, penalties and awarded damages can be more severe, but penalties and damages can be awarded whether you charge for it or not.

Myth 5: Copyrights expire after 3 years.

Fact: A work that is created (fixed in tangible form for the first time) on or after January 1, 1978, is automatically protected from the moment of its creation and is ordinarily given a term enduring for the author's life plus an additional 70 years

after the author's death, or until the author has transferred the copyrights to another entity.

Final Note on Copyrights: Facts and ideas can't be copyrighted, but the way those facts and ideas are presented and the system of implementation can be. You can write about anything that you research, as long as you use your own words and style of presentation.

6. Why Sell Information Products?

Money! Power! Leisure time! Lifestyle! The list goes on and on, but most importantly, because information never goes out of style. There will always be a market for quality information products.

The doors of wisdom are never shut.
- Benjamin Franklin

It's certainly possible to make a lot of money at it, especially in this modern era of the Internet revolution. And of course, money can lead to having more personal power, more leisure time, a better lifestyle, and all those things people chase after.

People are becoming rich today in ways never before possible. They're becoming rich from ideas published in digital format created in record time for a minimal investment. That's for us! With the Internet and eBook creation software, anyone can become a self-publisher for very little cost. Come up with just one good idea that really catches fire and you could be set for years, perhaps for life.

Ah, how sweet!

Traditionally, information vendors had to buy research materials, develop a product, pay the cost of layout and printing, attempt to target the right audience, buy ads in magazines and newspapers, and then wait...and hope the money would start coming in. It often took months before they knew if their idea, their product, and their ad campaign were all good.

If it didn't work, they were left wondering whether it was the ad that didn't work, the publication the ad was placed in, or the product concept itself that didn't cause people to buy.

They often didn't know whether to scrap the idea, tweak the idea, write new ad copy, advertise somewhere else, or just what the answer was. It could be, and more often than not was, a very expensive way to try to earn money, and many a would-be entrepreneur lost thousands of dollars trying. Convincing a publisher to produce a book was even more of a challenge, and just as time consuming and frustrating.

Today, with computers and Internet access in hundreds of millions of homes, businesses, and schools around the world, you can create, test, tweak, and work your idea until the answers are clear - all for very little cost and at lightning speed compared to traditional information selling avenues.

7. But Why An eBook?

Because eBooks are a perfect product. Face it, you're not likely to ever become financially independent working for someone else or selling other people's products. By financially independent, I mean that you're not at the mercy of an employer for your income, and you have all the income you need to sustain your lifestyle. To create that kind of wealth, you have to develop your own product or products.

Why not create a product:

- With a high profit margin,
- That's easy to deliver,
- Never needs to be restocked,
- Has a high perceived value,
- Offers instant gratification to customers,
- Helps, informs or entertains people,
- Can be sold over and over,
- Can take as little as 20 - 100 hours to develop,
- And can be developed, marketed and sold in your spare time?

An eBook is that product. It can be your ticket to a better life. Even if you never come up with that one product idea that will explode your income, I believe it's well within reach for most people to be able to create additional income streams that will supplement their finances and enhance their lifestyle. Plus, there is always the chance that you will hit the jackpot and create wealth for yourself.

One key to wealth creation is to have a desirable product with a high profit margin. With the right informational product, you can sell your eBook for $30,

$40, even $50 or more. I've seen some for sale at over one hundred dollars, and it's almost all pure profit.

In fact, other than your normal web site hosting fees, after a handful of sales to pay for the software investment or to pay the cost of having someone compile it for you, it's all profit.

You can even do without a web site if you want to try it that way. You can create an affiliate program, outsource everything, advertise in ezines, get your product in the hands of reviewers, and never have to build a web site at all - but I wouldn't recommend going about it that way. The mini-web site you build will probably be your most effective selling tool because no one will care about your product as much as you do.

8. Why People Would Pay for Your Information

Indeed, why would they pay for your information, or anyone's information for that matter? But wait, haven't you paid for information before? Of course you have, you're reading this, you've bought books, newspapers, magazines, and other information products. For what reasons did you buy these products? Information products can save people precious time, money, and a whole lot of research dead ends and frustration. You've already done the research for them, found and organized the information, added your own ideas that no one else could, and packaged it all up very nicely. You've made it easy for them and saved them a lot of trouble. People pay for convenience - always have, always will. Of course, it could also simply entertain them if that's the nature of your product.

If you have a professional looking web site to go along with a great eBook cover graphic so that it all looks 100% professional, you'll likely be considered an expert on your topic. Your potential customers may well feel that they'll miss key information if they don't buy your product. Anyone willing to spend money to know more doesn't want to miss out on crucial information.

Also, many people either don't know how to research effectively, or are unwilling to do the research necessary and then organize the information they want to have. Without you, they'd have to do without it. Many folks simply don't want to hunt for answers and have to think things out for themselves, they want to be TOLD the answers, and they're willing to pay for them.

Few people think more than two or three times a year; I have made an international reputation for myself by thinking once a week.

- George Bernard Shaw

But what really motivates people to spend money on an individual basis? They want:

- To make more money,
- To have more friends,
- To have better health,
- To have an easier life,
- To be on the cutting edge,
- To improve their relationships,
- To improve skills in some area,
- To gain a better lifestyle,
- To improve their appearance,
- To be happy,
- To be smarter,
- To feel safer,
- To have peace of mind,
- To be remembered,
- To be loved,
- To release fear/have security,
- To be more knowledgeable,
- To be entertained and have fun,

...to name just a few motivations. To sum it up though, there has to be something in it for them that improves their life in a tangible or intangible way. Pure and simple, that's all there is to it.

People buy on their emotions and justify having made the purchase with their logic.
- Tony Robbins

Logically, you'd think you want to write your sales copy to appeal to reason and intellect, but in reality copy that appeals to an emotional quality usually sells more product to a general audience. That isn't necessarily true if you have a niche product though. If you're writing for a highly technically adept audience, you may do better with logic, reason, facts and figures.

9. I'm Convinced, How Much Can I Make?

I won't lie to you, it's possible your first information product won't make anything. Your first product idea might not be a marketable idea. I don't know you, your idea, your skills, your work ethic, or your intelligence level, so I'm not going to fill your head with an inflated best-case scenario.
To give you some kind of idea so that you're eager to begin though, let's assume that you have a fairly good idea and created a decent product - not great, but decent enough to be marketable. Let's look at the potential of a product like that because most people can make a decent product if they work at it hard enough.

Suppose you've developed a nice eBook showing people how to teach whales to play the piano because everyone has pet whales these days. You've covered all the basics and added some original ideas, and you are selling it for $25.00.

You send out free review copies to ezine publishers who have agreed to review your product in their ezine if they like it. Let's say your product gets good reviews in 10 ezines that have a combined subscriber base of 250,000 people. There are thousands of ezines, and several that have more subscribers than that by themselves, so that's not an unrealistic figure.

A hype-ster would use an example like, "if only 5% of them bought your product" - but that's not likely to happen. A more realistic expectation would be that 1/2 of 1 percent would buy it, but for this example, let's say that just 1/4 of 1% of them buy your product (look ma, no hype at all). That's only 625 sales out of 250,000 readers, but wait, that's much better than it sounds.

That means you just made $15,625.00, and we're not even talking about having an idea that really caught fire. Suppose you spent 100 hours researching and creating your eBook, you earned $156.25 an hour for your efforts. Do you make

that much now? Can you see why this is such an exciting opportunity within your reach?

That doesn't even take into consideration the sales you can make from your web site, word of mouth referrals, affiliate sales if you go that route, and recurring sales to your first customers as you develop new quality products. That was just a one time shot and it's excellent money.

Wouldn't you go right back out onto the Internet, after a little celebratory shopping spree of course, and find other places to market your product? Wouldn't you find more ezine publishers to review it? Wouldn't you test some ads this time, and when you develop a good selling ad copy, wouldn't you buy ads in several ezines? I think you'd be so excited you'd be hard to slow down.

Fortunately, it's a product that you can keep selling until it runs it's course. That could be a few months or many years. Some of the best selling information products today were written 10-20 years ago. Those authors are still raking it in.

Can you say, "I like that idea!"

Each sale made boosts how much you made per hour if you like to think in those terms. That can be a nice supplemental income stream. Now let's think bigger and create another product and do it again. Two products, two income streams.

If you just crank out one new product every two months you'll have six products in a year that you can keep reselling. Even if only two of them catch on you've created a very nice income for yourself. Repeating this until you have several products that sell well can lead to financial independence.

And for the ones that don't turn out well, what did you give up? A little TV time maybe? Well la-de-da and whoopty-do!

On the other hand, if just ONE product really catches fire, you could become wealthy from it. It's happening for others, why not for you? And with that

question, don't go thinking of all the reasons why it can't happen for you. Focus on the positive, believe that it can happen. Make it happen. There's no worthwhile reason for doubt and negativity!

Our doubts are traitors and make us lose the good we oft might win by fearing to attempt.
- William Shakespeare

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10. Making Money Isn't The Only Benefit!

Let's suppose that money isn't your immediate need or goal. Your passion lies elsewhere, and you want to create a name for yourself and you need a traffic magnet to draw people to your web site. Instead of selling an eBook, you're going to give yours away as a promotional tool.
Since your eBook is free, you can expect more downloads and more referrals from person to person if it's a good product. Suppose you offered it for review to the same ezine publishers in the previous example, and for the sake of round numbers and no hype, that 2% of the subscribers downloaded it. That's 5,000 people that came to your web site, not counting any referrals they make.

If you have quality content, you can expect many of them to bookmark your site and come back, tell their friends, and even put links to your site on their site, creating more traffic. Now you're beginning to make a name for yourself.

Almost anyone can be an author; the business is to collect money and fame from that state of being.
- A. A. Milne, Author (Winnie-the-Pooh and over 80 others)

You could list your eBook at some freeware and shareware sites, and let other web sites give it away as well. Ezine owners might give you some great free publicity if you let them give it away to their subscribers. Same-topic ezines could even offer it as a relevant content free reward for subscribing to their ezine so they can get more subscribers.

Your name doesn't even have be associated with it at that level. Once a consumer has your eBook, he or she can find your site from the content.

Just don't over promote yourself in it or you'll find less people willing to give you publicity, and fewer people will find it interesting enough to give you a second thought. If your self-promotion smacks of ego, your product is doomed to mediocrity at best.

Egotism is nature's compensation for mediocrity.
- L.A. Safian

A lot of sites don't get 5,000 visitors in a year, but in our example, which is very achievable, you just got that many visitors over the course of a few days. That doesn't even include the secondary traffic drawing methods mentioned. Do you see the potential for bringing in new traffic to your site? Of course you do!

Those aren't the only benefits either. Being the publisher of your own eBook helps establish you as an expert in your field, just as publishing an ezine does. This can lead to many other profitable opportunities such as speaking engagements, training sessions, seminars, consultation gigs, partnerships and joint ventures, freelance assignments, new and better jobs, even to dead tree book deals.

Let me tell you a quick story of how I became a published book author (a print book, not an eBook). In late 1997 I started an ezine at the urging of people that had been using my web site tutorials and liked the way I wrote, so, Almost a Newsletter was born.

I called it Almost a Newsletter because I didn't fancy myself a writer, didn't know anything about publishing an ezine, and since I was the author of it, it didn't seem like a newsletter to me.

I wrote the first issue for 12 people, and I was one of them. It sucked, at least compared to the award winning ezine it has evolved into. But it caught on anyway, and soon dozens of subscribers became hundreds, then thousands. One of the subscribers, Tom Dean, is the webmaster for my publisher's web site. While discussing business one day, Tom told the publisher about me. He suggested they should have me write a book on web site design for them.

To make a long story short, I did, and Web Site Design Made Easy is now the teaching text in colleges all over the United States. I never intended to write a book when I started my web site, I didn't even intend to self-publish an ezine, but because of my ezine and tutorials I was considered an expert and was handed a golden opportunity.

The point is, when others view you as an expert on a topic, you never know what opportunities it will lead to. So in addition to the monetary rewards or traffic generation an eBook can offer, there are intangibles that may be bigger than anything you might imagine.

11.   It All Starts with an Idea

You may already have an idea of what you want to write about, or you may not have a clue but know you want to get in on the action and start selling your own information products.
It all starts with an idea. The technical aspects of creating the actual eBook are only a very small part of creating a successful information product. Most of your time in creating your eBook will be spent researching and writing it, and how to do that is a large part of the focus of this guide.

There are basically two types of topics you can write about, niche topics and topics with broad appeal.

Niche topics are topics of limited interest, or specialties within a broader topic. While niche topic products won't have mass appeal, you can usually charge more for them because there is less competition and the information is harder to find.

Conversely, topics with broad appeal will have a much larger base of potential customers, but you'll also have more competition. To try for the best of both worlds, you might look for an unexploited niche in a topic with broad appeal, or develop a broad appeal topic that covers an unexploited niche and have that be one of the main benefits that makes your product better than the competition.

A niche, whether within a topic with broad appeal or a true niche topic unto itself, is like operating in a market void because no one else is there. Your ideas will sell best in a void because you're the only one there to fill it - if it's a void that needs filling, of course.

Ideas also sell best in a mental void. For example, if you're trying to sell folks on the idea that an easy way to make money is to spam people with unsolicited

email, you'll have a hard time selling that notion because almost everyone but a newbie knows it's not true.

That idea might be successful with newbies though, because as far as the Internet is concerned, they usually start off operating in a knowledge void about it. They have a general lack of knowledge about the Internet, and about the specifics, such as the fact that most people consider spam a nuisance at best.

In the mental void of a newbie, the idea may work because they may not have any preconceived thoughts about whether spam is a tasty way to make money. That makes it easier to plant the idea. But for knowledgeable people, you'd have to destroy their existing belief that spam is bad before you could replace it with the idea that spam is good, and that can be a very tough challenge indeed. People tend to hang on to their beliefs, especially if changing their mind means sending money to you.

Of course, if you did offer a highly questionable product that advocates spamming as an effective and ethical way to make money, you'd also quickly gain a reputation as a snake oil salesman and would have a hard time doing anything legitimate in the future.

You don't want to ruin your online reputation before you even get started, and word spreads at lightning speed on the Internet. That makes being ethical and developing truly useful products that benefit others doubly important. That's where having the right attitude comes into play.

After reading your eBook, your reader should be able to follow your advice and instructions and succeed with the resources you provide. Or, if it's an entertainment product, they should have been suffiently entertained.

12.   The Magic Key to Success and Profits

It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look. To affect the quality of the day - that is the highest of arts.
- Henry David Thoreau, American essayist, poet, and philosopher

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To find real and lasting success, that's the kind of attitude you must have. You want to have your information product positively affect the quality of the day for the person that buys it. If you strive to achieve that kind of quality in your product, you stand a much greater chance of creating an eBook that will place you above the mediocre masses. Hey, bonus - you'll feel damn good about yourself for your accomplishment, too!

As consumers, we've been bombarded with so many ads in every medium, we've seen so many come-ons, there are so many cries for our attention, that there are few markets that aren't already crowded with voices.

Quality is the key to becoming more than just another cry in the wilderness. For a variety of reasons, including just plain laziness, most people settle for less than their best. To stand out from the throngs of the average, you must give the best you have to your product creation.

While you can make some money from a mediocre product and presentation, it's those who are able to differentiate themselves by the quality of their products that will make the serious money.

Not doing more than the average is what keeps the average down.
- William M. Winans

The time you're willing to spend on it is often the only difference between turning out a top quality product or turning out a mediocre or poor product. Where the mediocre product developer stops when he or she feels it's finished, the outstanding product developer steps back, takes a break from it, and then goes back into the product with new focus looking for ways to improve it. While you can create an information product in as little as 20 - 100 hours, I spent well over 300 hours creating this eBook. I wanted it to be the best product of its kind.

Studies indicate that the one quality all successful people have is persistence. There's a very positive relationship between people's ability to accomplish any task and the time they're willing to spend on it.
- Dr. Joyce Brothers

Therein lies a key to producing your best works. When you think it's finished, when you think it's ready for prime time, set it aside and do something else. Maybe send it to a few trusted people whose opinions you value and ask for suggestions and criticisms. Make sure they know you're not just fishing for compliments, but that you're trying to improve it.

Go back to it several days later and take a long, hard look at it once again. You're bound to see ways you can improve it. If you find ways to improve, then do so, and step back and take another break from it. Do this until you stop finding ways to make it better.

Then, and only then, will you have turned in your best effort.

...do not try to shortchange the Muse. It cannot be done. You can't fake quality any more than you can fake a good meal.
- William Seward Burroughs, American writer, naturalist

If it seems like I'm spending a lot of time harping about quality, it's because I want you to succeed. Not only will you be better off for it, but you'll think more highly of me for showing you the path.

I could have just tossed together the how-to stuff for this eBook, left you to your own devices and called it done. That would have been much faster and easier to do, but I'm striving for the same quality I'm stressing to you. If I'm successful, I will have created the product I envisioned. But in order for me to help you help yourself, you have to fully comprehend that product quality is the primary factor of importance.

The magic key to success is to build a superior quality product.

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13. The Essential Ingredients of Success

The actual topic(s) you choose to write about are an endless parade of options. Whatever you choose to write your first eBook about, remember that you don't have to discover a new topic. You do need to create a product that does one or more of the following:

- Presents the information in a better way than before.
- Is more easily understood than similar products.
- Is more comprehensive than similar products.
- Makes the customers life easier in some way.
- Saves them time or money.
- Helps them achieve a goal.
- Gives them a sense of pride, satisfaction, or accomplishment.
- Motivates them into positive, rewarding action.
- Adds new ideas to old information.
- Makes them feel better about themselves.
- Helps them solve a problem.
- Increases their understanding or knowledge.
- Enables them to do something better, faster, easier, or with less aggravation and hassle.
- Fill in the blank.

Fill in the blank, what's that all about? The items listed above aren't an exhaustive list, but to fill in the blank for you, your product has to HELP them in some way. (Help can be in the form of amusing and entertaining your customer if that's the product goal.)

Here's a News Flash: the whole idea of a successful eBook is NOT to make money, it's to HELP people. Money or increased traffic to your web site, depending on your goal, is the byproduct and reward for a job well done. If your product somehow helps people, you will be rewarded accordingly.

You can get everything you want in life if you will just help enough other people to get what they want.
- Zig Ziglar

This is where a lot of people fail. They focus on what's in it for them instead of what's in it for a future customer. That focus becomes evident in product quality and usefulness, which limits its success probability. If you keep a "help attitude" in mind from the beginning and focus on what's in it for your customer, you'll most likely create a better product that will be a greater success for you in the end. You and your customers will both be better off, and that's the definition of win/win.

To succeed, you must plan for and expect success from the onset. You must see your product as a success. You must see yourself as a success and demand a success attitude of yourself. It will help you to create a better product. Success in business might be described as the condition when the business and the customer both win, and both feel they've gotten fair compensation for what they gave up.

Before you write a word, before you even choose a topic if you haven't already, make a promise to yourself and to me. Promise that you'll put together the best information product that you possibly can.

If you don't, I can easily forgive for not doing your best, if I haven't wasted my money on it, but I will take away your milk and cookies.

More importantly though, is how easily can you forgive yourself and live with yourself if you sabotage your own efforts by not giving the best there is in you to your future?

Think long term here. You're not creating one product, you're creating a future for yourself. A future that you're in charge of. I want you to succeed beyond your own expectations. So...

Remember that the quality of your product is a reflection on you as a person. Not only in the minds of your customers, but in your own mind as well. Be a shaker and baker, not a faker and taker.

If you don't give it your best effort, you'll know it. Knowing you didn't do your best will gnaw at your conscience, make you wonder what could have been, and seed a less than best attitude and effort in other areas of life. Perhaps you've already fallen into that trap. Perhaps you've never learned to give your best to anything. Perhaps the rewards were never obvious enough to motivate you to personal excellence. If so, the right time to begin is now.

Remember this: The past doesn't equal the future.

It's never to late to set sail for the shores of a better life, a better way of thinking, a better you. Being quality minded isn't just a business attitude, it is a way of life. Developing a mind set that strives for top quality will not only improve your product, your finances, and your self-image, it will improve your life in unexpected ways at unanticipated moments. Trust me on that, I learned the hard way.

Let's recap some of the main points of this section:

- Your product has to help your customer.
- Your rewards are a byproduct of a job well done.
- You have to have the "help" attitude from the beginning.

- Visualize your success and the success of your product.
- Promise yourself you will give the best there is in you to it.
- Think long term, you're creating your future.
- Your product is a reflection on you.
- The past doesn't equal the future (but if you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten).

To summarize the most essential ingredient: your product has to help people. Poor design, boring writing, and many other sins can be forgiven if the product is truly helpful.

14.   How to Generate Topic Ideas

By now you should have realized that the quality of your product is of essential importance. Hopefully you've promised yourself to think long term and create the best product that you possibly can. If so, you've got the winning attitude it takes, and hopefully the commitment to go along with it, so now it's time to pick a topic.
If you already have a topic, I think you'll still find this next part worth reading just the same. If you don't have a topic, the logical question is, "how do I figure out what to write about?"

The answer to that question is, beats the heck out of me, I thought you had an idea when you bought this.

Just kidding!

There are many ways to choose a topic. One way is to find out what people are looking for. What are the most popular searches at search engines? There are a few sites that share the most often searched for words and phrases with you.

To find the most popular terms over an aggregate period of time:

- Lycos Search Engine
Shows the top 50 searches on Lycos.

- C/Net's Search.com
Shows the top 100 searches at Search.com

- Search Terms
Shows the 100 most popular searches.

The first two give you most the popular searches at their respective search engines, the last is the most popular searches at a search engine they claim must be kept confidential.

Just finding the most popular search terms isn't enough. You still have to find a need or want within that topic and then fill it. That's the gist of having a successful product, to fill a need or want, solve a problem, or otherwise find and provide the kind of information people are willing to pay for.

Approaching search terms from another angle, you can enter your choice of keywords and keyword phrases into certain sites, and have these sites report on how often the keywords and phrases were searched for during a given time period, usually the previous month. They can be a useful tool when used right. Here are a few of them:

- Kudosnet Keyword Generator

Type in up to 5 keywords/phrases and receive up to 100 keyword suggestions and how often they were searched for the previous month. An excellent tool.

- GoTo

Click the "search term suggestion tool" and type in a keyword. It will give you a list of how often that keyword and related keyword searches have been performed for the previous month. It's more limited than the above site as it only lets you search for one keyword at a time.

If that link doesn't work you may have to hunt the GoTo site for the search term suggestion tool, they do move it around regularly. To find it after they've moved it, you usually have go through the motions like you're going to bid on search terms until you get to the area with a link to the keyword suggestion tool.

At some point in the future, you may even need to open an account to access the tool. You wouldn't be paying just to use the search term suggestion tool though, because you can use the deposit to bid on search terms.

- Wordtracker

Click the trial to test it, but make it good. The free trial is limited.
Below are sites where you can see what people are searching for in real time. While far less useful than compiled results, they can give you ideas, and that's what you're looking for is ideas. One caveat though, you may see words that offend your sensibilities. Some people search for things even sicker than you can imagine.

- Excite Search Voyeur
- Ask Jeeves Peek Through The Keyhole
- MetaCrawler MetaSpy
- Search.com Snoop
- Kanoodle Search Spy
- InfoTiger

You also might install the Keyword Live software from AnalogX and monitor the top 100 keywords and phrases being used on several popular search engines without surfing the web. You'll find the Keyword Live software at:

- Analog X

You can also subscribe to the free Word Spot Top 200 report and receive the top 200 keywords and keyword phrases emailed to you weekly. For a fee you can subscribe to the Top 1,000 most searched for keywords and keyword phrases. You can sign up for either report at:

- Word Spot

Remember, you don't have to know anything about a topic to make a product about it. If you're willing to do the research and learn about it, you can become enough of an expert about most anything to be able to create a viable product to

market. You might want to stay away from nuclear physics though. I hear that's kind of hard.

Here are some more suggestions to generate ideas to write about:

- See what the best selling books in the real world are. Popular print books are often a good topic for eBooks. Visit your local book store or check out the best seller lists.

- Visit online forums (bulletin boards) about topics that interest you. Look for common questions and problems people have and make notes. Answer the questions, solve the problems and create a product.

- Subscribe to email discussions lists on topics that interest you. Look for the questions and problems people seek answers to. These could be product ideas. In addition, often within a few days someone will give you the answer to the questions people ask. Just remember to rewrite it in your own words.

Incidently, the topics that interest you might only interest you because you feel they are hot topics, not necessarily burning passions of yours. Making money is interesting, don't you think?

- If you have a web site, ezine, or other public forum, just ask what people want to learn about or what problems they need solved. Ask them what kind of information product they'd like to see. This can be one of the most effective ways to develop product ideas. Don't just take the first issue and run with it though. Look for common themes to develop a broader ranged product.

   For example, one person might suggest a product that teaches new computer owners how to do monthly maintenance. While you could make

a small eBook about using Scandisk, Defrag, how to take off the cover and clean out the dust and hair, deleting temp files, and so on, look for more.

Another person might ask how a computer works in general. Yet another might want to know how to troubleshoot problems for themselves. Instead of an eBook about monthly maintenance, you could develop much more comprehensive product that teaches new users all they need to know to keep their computer healthy and running smoothly, sell it for more, and have a happier customer.

- Another way to find out what kind of problems people need solved is to subscribe to newsgroups and lurk. Subscribing to newsgroups is free and they are full of people seeking help for one problem or another. Once you identify a strong need you can develop your knowledge and your product. As with discussion lists, monitoring the newsgroup will often yield the answers to the questions.

  You can keep visiting the newsgroups as you are working on your product and become known for your friendly and helpful nature by answering questions as your knowledge grows. When your product is ready, keep answering questions, but include a signature file with your answers that briefly (one line) describes your product and link it to your web site.

  By the way, if you're stuck in finding an answer for a problem while creating your product, you can post your own questions and may well have someone solve it for you. Newsgroups can be marvelously helpful. Just be sure to post your question in the right newsgroup to keep it "on topic" and follow group etiquette.

  The dark side of newsgroups is that you have to be mindful that any files you download may contain a virus. Newsgroups are mostly uncensored too, so you may find extremely offensive pictures and language. Just stick to text-based posts and you shouldn't have much trouble.

- Look for popular software products that perform tasks a person doesn't need software for. You may be able to offer an eBook showing how to perform that task without buying the software. The benefit of buying your eBook over the software is that you offer it for less or offer much more for about the same price.

  For example, there are many software products that do what Windows already does, but most people aren't aware of all the things they have on their PC's. What, you don't believe that?

  If you have a Windows 98 PC, did you know you have tools called Internet Explorer Repair Tool, Direct X Diagnostic Tool, Windows Report Tool, System File Checker, Signature Verification Tool, Registry Checker, Dr. Watson, System Configuration Utility, Version Conflict Manager, and other tools?

  Most people don't know that, or if they do they don't have a clue how to use them. They buy tools that do the same things these tools do because they run across someone else's software and the promotion that tells them about it. Some of the software is better than Windows utilities, some isn't, but they buy the tools because they don't often know what they have.

  I think a series of eBooks that teaches people how to use all those mysterious tools people have might do nicely if priced right and marketed right.

- Surf! Surfing can give you ideas. Keep your eyes open for new products and services and ask yourself questions about how they could be improved.

- Ask your friends and family what problems they have that need to be solved, or brainstorm with them about possible topics. You never know where that might lead.

- Anytime you need information and are having a hard time finding it, or have a hard time winnowing the good, useful information from the bad and less useful information, you've got a product possibility. Think about what you'd like to know more about, or what you'd like to see in products that you can't find. You may discover a market void and can be the first to fill it.

- Look for other information products that are hot topics. Create your own product that is better, or is as good and costs less, or has more benefits. Just don't copy my ideas, it's not nice to undercut the teacher who showed you the way. :o)

You don't necessarily have to write about hot topics. Simply writing about what you have a passion for can be a rewarding exercise in itself. When you teach, you also learn more, so you'll increase your knowledge as well.

You can most likely find prospects for any topic you can think of. I seriously doubt if you're the only person in the world that has a passion for any particular topic. While this approach may limit the number of people your product appeals to, it may well be more rewarding to you and keep you excited about creating it and other information products about other passions you have, while still providing you with an income stream, albeit perhaps, a smaller income stream.

You may want to specialize as well. For example, if you wanted to make a recipe eBook because you love to bake and cook, I'd guess it wouldn't do very well because you can find recipes for free on home pages and professional sites all over the Internet. There are tens of thousands of them.

However, if you offer an eBook with 500 delicious desserts at a reasonable price, you might profit nicely from that because it would most likely be very time consuming and difficult for a customer to track down that many dessert recipes on their own.

Now, I'm not saying that would be a marketable product, I haven't researched it. I just made it up for the sake of having an example. But just guessing, I'd think a product like that could be sold for a nominal price. I don't think it would do well with a high price though.

You can market information products solving cyber world problems or real world problems, or teach real world skills as well.

You might create a home maintenance guide for new homeowners, a gardening guide, a home safety guide, a child safety guide, a car care guide, or teach how to train pets, how to refinish furniture, how to play guitar, how to buy a house, how to hire the right lawyer, create a hobby guide, etc.

There is a market for nearly anything if a product is of high quality, is sold at the right price, and reaches the target market.

15.   Researching

I make all my research notes in a plain text file using my favorite text editor when I'm at my computer. Many text editors, such as TextPad, have bookmark features. This comes in very handy as your document grows. Being able to press one key and jumping to places you've bookmarked can save a lot of hunting. Off line I use some really nifty high tech gadgets called...a pencil and paper. I really should buy a laptop one of these days.

I start off by listing a few working titles. The working titles are not necessarily going to be the title of the product, I save the job of choosing the real title until the product is finished because the actual body of work can suggest the best title when it's finished. The working titles do help motivate me though. My first working title for this was:

The Most Complete Guide to eBook Profits Available!

I chose that not for its marketability, but to remind myself of what kind of product I wanted to be responsible for. It motivated me from beginning to end to give it my best effort. For marketing purposes, that title is a little too long and forgettable, and I find it lacking in appeal. It could have been a good subtitle though. eBook Farming creates instant curiousity, because what the heck is eBook Farming? The subtitle gives the answer and uses powerful words that draw a reader into reading the sales message.

If new title ideas pop into my head as I'm working on a product, I add them to the list. These working titles can also help you develop your product because you may get content ideas by creating titles. Working titles are meant more to inspire you than to be an effective selling title. We'll cover what constitutes a good selling title in a later section. For now, it's enough to just have a few working titles. I ended up with 37 working titles for this eBook by the time I was finished with it.

By this time you should have an idea of how to find a topic if you didn't already have one. To continue, we'll assume you have found your topic. Now it's time to begin the research.

Research is the art of seeing what everyone else has seen, and doing what no-one else has done.
- A. Nonny Moose

There are many sources for researching your topic. There are public libraries, college libraries (you usually don't have to be a student to use them), hobby clubs, professional organizations, trade papers and magazines, brains to be picked and links to be clicked.

Libraries, and your friendly librarian, is where research has been traditionally started in the BTI days (Before The Internet). Nowadays, many people start their research online. All the resources just mentioned can be excellent sources of information, and it wouldn't hurt to utilize each one that is available for your topic. Care should be taken however, especially on the Internet, to verify any crucial information. There is a lot of information that is simply opinion passed off as fact online.

Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.
- Zora Neale Hurston

From a research perspective, the Internet is nothing more than an unorganized web of paths to various sites and databases that contain information. There are often better and faster ways to find what you're looking for. It is also important to realize that the information you want may not be available through the Internet.

We should always approach using the Internet for research in the same way we would research in other media: try to determine the purposes of the information provider and consider that with any conclusions you draw.

For example, if you find a site offering information on using a particular software product, try to determine if they have a financial interest in the sales of that product before taking their word for it that it's the best program of it's kind. You don't want to recommend it to your customers and have it turn out to be a piece of do-do. Of course, if it's a site you already know and trust exceptions may be made at your own risk.

Remember that hard data is often easier to find in libraries, books, CD-roms, and commercial databases. The strength of the Internet is in two-way communication. Newsgroups, special interest groups, discussion lists and online forums can often solve problems faster and more efficiently then just surfing for information.

When posting requests for information in newsgroups, discussion lists, and forums, remember these two points:

Keep it appropriate and relevant to the group.
Keep it brief. Don't waste people's time and bandwidth. Every person has just so much time, don't take too much of it from them when your looking for the favor of them providing information to you.
While bandwidth may not be an issue in most of the United States, bear in mind that in most parts of the world people pay by the minute to use the phone, and so,

by the minute to use the Internet. Long, rambling messages waste their time and money.

In short, just use common sense and respect everyone's time.

You'll find many research resources scattered throughout this eBook and many more listed in the Bonus Section.

16.   General Search Tips

I'm going to assume you know how to at least perform a simple search on a search engine, so I won't go into details about that. Very briefly, for those that don't know, a search engine is a database of web sites. You enter a keyword into a little text box and click the Search button and the search engine returns links to pages it thinks best match your search query.

There are tens of thousands of search sources, obviously I can't give you a list of them all, even if I knew them all. The best thing I can teach you to do is how to search and provide a good list of starting points. It's the old biblical proverb with a modern twist: give a man a search and you feed him for a day, teach a man to search and he gets lost on his own. Oops, that wasn't quite right.

Anyway, here are some general search tips, power search tips follow in the next section:

Define and understand the problem.

In order to perform efficient Internet research, attempt to define your problem. You might write down all the important things you know about the research topic. This information will be useful in helping you define your search terms and search criteria.

Determine the information type of your search.

Are you searching for a text document, a PDF file, a photograph, a software program, or what? Since they all have different file formats, you can use search tools and specific sites to limit your search to the appropriate formats. For example, there are search sites that search only for images, or sound files, etc.

Search tools you might find useful, commonly called Internet Agents, are software programs like Copernic and Web Ferret. You might consider them your personal search engine of search engines. They'll search many search engines and

directories at once and compile the results for you, while removing duplicates at the same time.

These are software programs you download to your computer and let them do the searching for you while you work on other things. There are many search assistants you can find at shareware sites. The two I mentioned can be found at:

- Copernic
- Web Ferret

And here are a few more:

- AgentSoft
- Autonomy
- BotSpot
- SSSpider

If that's not enough to choose from, you'll find more reviewed at:

- Stroud's CWSApps

Practice before you need them.

Don't wait until you have to have information to learn how to use the search tools. Familiarizing yourself with the way they operate and how you can most effectively use them can save you a lot of time and trouble later.

17. Power Search Tips

Most users aren't very efficient at finding the information they need. They've never taken the time to learn power searching techniques that help narrow down search results to the ones that are most relevant. If you're going to research, you might as well learn to be an expert search hound.

I can't give you specific tips for all the search engines out there, that would just take up too much space to discuss them all when most of you will only be using a few favorite ones.

I will give you some general tips that apply to most search engines. I'd suggest you pick out a favorite search engine or two and learn the specifics of power searching on those. Power searching can greatly reduce your misses and help you find the sites you're really looking for.

Note: not all the techniques below work at all search engines, but most will work at most search engines and should help you immensely. Most search engines have their specific power searching (also called advanced search) techniques published. Learn the techniques for your favorite search site, you won't be sorry. You might even make a chart listing them and keep it by your computer so you can easily refer to it when you search.

Here are some power tips for conducting research:

Be Specific

The more specific your search query is, the more luck you'll have finding exactly what you want. For example, if you want information about blue foam whatzawhoozles don't just enter "whatzawhoozle" as your search query. You'd get information about all kinds of nasty whatzawhoozles, not just the nice blue foam ones.

You can even be more specific than that. Suppose your blue foam whatzawhoozle won't rinse clean. Try entering "My blue foam whatzawhoozle won't rinse clean" as your search query, you might be surprised how often this will bring exactly what you want on the first try.

Must Have's

With multiple word searches, search engines will often return results where only some of the words will be found on the page, but sometimes you want the search engine to find pages that have all the words you enter. The plus symbol lets you do this.

For example, you want to find pages that have references to both cable and modem. You could search this way:

cable +modem

If you were researching cable modems, only pages that contain both words would be returned in the search results. This would eliminate irrelevant things like dial-up modems, cable television stations, etc.

Have Not's

Sometimes you might want to find pages with one word but not another. The minus symbol comes in handy here.

For example, you want to find pages about computer games, but you want games you can download and install, not games you can play online. You might try:

computer +games -online

That would most likely bring you a list of downloadable games, but not games you play online.

And I Quote

In the example showing you how to use the plus sign, that would return pages with both the words "cable" and "modem" on them, but they might not be together. It could be a page where a guy is talking about cable television in one place and dial-up modems further down the page. Using quotation marks makes a search engine return pages with the search words beside each other.

For example, if you are looking for the famous poem "Trees" by Joyce Kilmer, but can only remember the first line. Enter what you remember using quotation marks around it:

"I think that I shall never see, a poem as lovely as a tree"

That will bring search results where those words are found on a page just as you entered them.

I'll Have the Combo Meal, Please

With just that little bit of search refinement, you can improve your searches drastically, but combining those techniques can be even more effective. Suppose you want to find information about Og Mandino books, but not The Greatest Salesman In The World because you already have that book. Use:

book +Og +Mandino -"The Greatest Salesman In The World"

You'll most likely find just what you're looking for, if it's in the search engine database.

These techniques work best at true search engines like Google and Alta Vista. Directories, like Yahoo and Snap, work a little differently because they first bring you back web sites rather than individual pages within the web site. You can still use the techniques there, but it doesn't work as good and you often have to hunt the site they list to find the page the information is on. It can make you wonder why sites like Yahoo are so popular, because they often don't bring as relevant of results back that search engines do. Hint: it's because they were first. Remember the Coke/Pepsi test taste story from section three?

Here are some more cool search tips:

Title Search

Many search engines allow you to search specifically within the title of a web page. If you typed:

title: Background Magic

You'd most likely find my web site for my Background Magic software, since that term is in the title. So by using a title search with appropriate keywords you can often find pages dedicated solely to a particular topic. At Google, I entered:

title: Charles Dickens

And I found hundreds of web pages dedicated to Charles Dickens.

Site Search

Another very powerful search technique is to search specifically within one site. Many sites don't have their own search engines, but you can simulate it! The only drawback is that the search engine may not have all the site's content indexed, but the technique often brings good results. For example:

host: boogiejack.com html tutorials

Will bring you pages of my HTML tutorials. It also brings up a few other sites that have linked to them.

You can use power searching with this technique too. Suppose you want to find information about Corel Photopaint, but you don't want information from the company's web site because you're looking for unbiased information. Power search by entering:

"Corel Photopaint" -host:corel.com

...as your search term. That should help you find information about Corel Photopaint from other sources.

Link Search

This one's more for fun, but you can see how many sites link to your site with a link search.

link:boogiejack.com

Would show you a list of sites linking to mine. It doesn't give you all the sites that link to you, only sites that link to you that the search engine has indexed. I tried that on a few search engines a long time ago and found one search engine that had about 1,200 links to my site and another that had over 10,000 links to my site, so you can see how wildly the results can vary.

Wildcards

Some search engines support wild cards in the search term. This can be helpful if you don't know how to spell a word, or to look for plurals and stemming. If you were searching for my main site, Boogie Jack's Web Depot, which you foolishly forgot to bookmark when you were there and now you can't remember if I spell it Boogie or Boogy, you could search like this:

Boog* Jack

Unless there's someone out there going by Boogy Jack, that should let you easily find my site. Bookmark it this time, eh?

Stemming is when the search engine looks for all forms of a word, sing* would cause it to look for sings, singers, singing, etc. However, searching for:

electro*

Would bring back pages about electroacoustics, electroanalysis, electrocardiograms, and many other non-related terms, so you have to be careful how you use a wild card or you'll get too many useless results.

Some search engine use automatic stemming. It won't hurt to use it, but some default to stemming so it isn't necessary. Once again, learning specifically how to best use your favorite search engines is recommended.

Here are some quick tips at a glance:

Capitalize names and titles.

Example: The Three Stooges

Use commas to separate names and titles.

Example: The Three Stooges, Larry Fine

Use double quotation marks or hyphens for words that must appear together.

Example: "every rose has a thorn"- or -every-rose-has-a-thorn

Put a plus sign in front of a word that must be found in the documents.

Example: Velveeta +cheese

Use a pipe to search within the current search results to narrow down the search results.

Example: blues|acoustic

Use link: to find pages with specific links on them.

Example: link:easycoolsoftware.com

Use site: to locate a site and its related pages

Example: site:backgroundmagic.com

Use title: to search for a specific title of a site.

Example: title:"Writing Tips for Amateurs"

Other search tips and resources:

- Free Pint is a free newsletter written by information professionals who share how they find information on the Internet. Sign up on their web site.
- Sometimes knowing when a web page was last updated is crucial to knowing if the information they present is current. Suppose you are researching current events and come across a report that a UFO was sighted over Denver last night.

That certainly might be news, but there is no date on the report. The page could be years old and the report has long since been proven a hoax. You wouldn't want to look foolish, so you type:

javascript:document.lastModified

...into the address field of your browser and press the Enter key. A new page shows you that the document was last modified at 09/20/1996 00:24:18. That document hasn't changed since 1996! Whew, you just saved yourself some embarrassment.

- More comprehensive and more relevant results are possible using search engines that specialize. For example, Excite NewsTracker gives you top stories at a glance from multiple news sources in multiple categories. Very handy.
- Open Text only indexes business web sites. Because there are fewer pages to index, these search engines are often more comprehensive within their area. They also may be able to update and root out dead links more regularly.

Please see the Resources section for tons of links to use as a starting point links for conducting your research.

18.   Web Information Managers

There are browser plugins that can aid you in your research. Commonly called web information managers or web organizers, you'll usually find them on shareware sites in the Browser Plugin category. I don't use them so I can't give you a qualified opinion about them, but I will point out a few of them to you.

Some people swear by these tools. I might be an old fuddy-duddy set in my ways so you may find them very useful. Here are three that have been recommended to me by fiends, I mean, friends. You can find many more at shareware sites.

- iHarvest One
- NetNotes
- Webforia Organizer and Webforia Reporter

You'll find a large list of freeware and shareware search sites in the Resources section.

19.   Getting Started Writing

Getting started is often the hardest part for experienced and new writers alike. Many sit and just stare, waiting for their muse. I'm not big on patience and waiting because I'm too good at it for it to be interesting. In fact, I'm so good at waiting I can wait all day in just 5 minutes.

Rather than sitting and struggling, I think the easiest way to get started is to create an outline for your eBook. An outline can be a synopsis of everything your eBook will be about, or it needn't be anything more than a temporary table of contents. I use the temporary table of contents method because it's a faster start.

To create your temporary table of contents, start off by listing everything you can think of that you MAY be covering in your eBook, and add any needed notes to remind yourself of what each chapter, section, or topic area is to be about. You can toss ideas out or move them into other content areas later, so don't be shy about listing every least little thing.

Since it's temporary, no one but you will see it, so there is no fear factor that others will find an idea silly (if you have such a fear). Instead of waiting for something to happen, you're taking action. It doesn't have to be very creative, taking action is the key. Once you start on it the old brain usually loosens up and ideas begin to flow.

Once you have temporary table of contents, look for other material on same and related topics. See what the table of contents are for those informational products and add to, modify, and restructure your own table of contents to build it into a more definitive list of everything you want to cover with your eBook.

After studying several other publication's and web site's tables of contents and working yours into shape, you should feel confident and ready to start. A table of

contents, synopsis, or outline if you prefer, gives you an excellent starting point for the actual content creation.

Perhaps it's best summed up by saying: you don't just jump into a car and drive across country without a road map, and you shouldn't sit down and start writing without a writing road map. The temporary table of contents can serve as your writing road map. If you need more detailed directions, then list the key points you want to make for each chapter or listing in your table of contents. By the time you've done that you'll have a pretty good writing road map.

Keep in mind that this is a temporary table of contents and not something that is written in stone. You can add items, delete items, and rearrange it at any point in the creation of your product, and I usually do.

How you actually start the writing process is up to you. If you have ideas ready to flow, by all means just write. There's no sense spending time researching when the creative juices are bubbling. If you don't know where to start, then you might start with research.

My first draft is usually just a bunch of random thoughts and idea scraps. Sometimes they are loosely organized, sometimes they are not organized at all. When ideas flow, write. Don't worry about punctuation, spelling, grammar, whether you've written something twice, where you've added it or anything else - just write. You can edit and organize it later.

If that kind of disorganization bothers you too much for comfort, you might try making a file for each section or chapter of your eBook where you can take your writings from the day and paste them into the appropriate sections. That way you'll feel a little more organized about it at day's end. You can put it back together later, but working that way will help keep your working page short and easier to follow while giving you a sense that you're progressing in an orderly way.

In the beginning, whether writing or researching, remember that you're going to go back through your writing and your notes dozens of times; rewriting pieces,

reorganizing things, rewording, adding, deleting, correcting, and probably wondering what the heck you were talking about in some places. This is all normal. It happens to me all the time, so it must be a sign of genius.

Getting started is often the hardest part for experienced and new writers alike. Many sit and just stare, waiting for their muse. I'm not big on patience and waiting because I'm too good at it for it to be interesting. In fact, I'm so good at waiting I can wait all day in just 5 minutes.

Rather than sitting and struggling, I think the easiest way to get started is to create an outline for your eBook. An outline can be a synopsis of everything your eBook will be about, or it needn't be anything more than a temporary table of contents. I use the temporary table of contents method because it's a faster start.

To create your temporary table of contents, start off by listing everything you can think of that you MAY be covering in your eBook, and add any needed notes to remind yourself of what each chapter, section, or topic area is to be about. You can toss ideas out or move them into other content areas later, so don't be shy about listing every least little thing.

Since it's temporary, no one but you will see it, so there is no fear factor that others will find an idea silly (if you have such a fear). Instead of waiting for something to happen, you're taking action. It doesn't have to be very creative, taking action is the key. Once you start on it the old brain usually loosens up and ideas begin to flow.

Once you have temporary table of contents, look for other material on same and related topics. See what the table of contents are for those informational products and add to, modify, and restructure your own table of contents to build it into a more definitive list of everything you want to cover with your eBook.

After studying several other publication's and web site's tables of contents and working yours into shape, you should feel confident and ready to start. A table of contents, synopsis, or outline if you prefer, gives you an excellent starting point for the actual content creation.

Perhaps it's best summed up by saying: you don't just jump into a car and drive across country without a road map, and you shouldn't sit down and start writing without a writing road map. The temporary table of contents can serve as your writing road map. If you need more detailed directions, then list the key points you want to make for each chapter or listing in your table of contents. By the time you've done that you'll have a pretty good writing road map.

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20. The Worst Mistake You Can Make

The worst mistake you can make when writing is to try and make it perfect the first time. This usually turns off the creative powers and turns on the censor within. When the writing flows, let it flow unimpeded by your inner censor. Your inner censor will not only slow down your creative voice or shut it off completely, but it can cause you to prematurely pass judgments on your work and ideas, which can just kill your enthusiasm. This is an especially important lesson for beginning writers.

Anything that impedes the creative process, such as misspellings, missing capitalization, improper punctuation, working too hard to find just the right words or expression, and so forth, is completely unimportant at this point. What is important is to tap into your creative powers when they're cooperative and just write. There will probably be times you may not feel creative. Those are the times when you can work on editing and cleaning things up, on research, and organization.

Having an unpredictable on and off switch to creativity is usually a condition that happens more often to beginning writers. People that write a lot are often able to turn the creative process on and off at will most of the time. I'm like that, but I write every day. Once you discover how easily you can turn on your creative juices, you'll be able to better gauge how and when you need to work.

21. 25 Writing Tips

1.   Just write. I know I just mentioned it in the previous section, but it's a key point. Your first draft can, and probably should, be full of errors. What?

Writing perfect copy only stifles the flow of ideas and creativity. Write now, fix later. Don't be afraid, you're the only one that has to see it until you're ready to unleash it on the world.

2.   Rewrite, rewrite, and rewrite. Most writers go through several drafts before they let anyone see even a part of their work. Then a few friends and associates see it, and it often goes through even more rewrites after that before it's released to the general public.

Writing is painting with words a little at a time, adding new colors as you go back over it, painting in more detail where needed - it's not a coat of paint you slap on a wall once or twice and are finished with it.

3.   Read a lot. The more you read, the better you'll write. Read a variety of material from a variety of writers for the most benefit. Pay particular attention to style and word usage, and punctuation if you need help in that area.

4.   Having said that...don't be afraid to violate the writing rules you learned in school. Perfect grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure doesn't always convey your point or personality as well as taking a little writer's liberty might. My apologies to all English teachers, but technicalities can be restrictive, form isn't everything. However, I wouldn't break the rules often or without reason.

5.   Know your intended audience. If you're writing a guide to enable high school dropouts to obtain their GED, they're probably not going to understand words like sedulous, excogitate, and pertinacious.

By the way, I don't know what those words mean either, my ham sandwich told me to use them.

6.   Break up a large task into several small ones. An eBook can be big, and quite a confusing and even oppressive undertaking to begin. However, each separate topic might be only a page or two. That's much easier to attack.

7.   All the great writers were paper wasters. Their trash cans were filled and emptied daily with the garbage they wrote. Nowadays you have the recycle bin, don't forget to empty it once in a while. Their secret, and my secret too, is to learn what to keep and what to throw out.

For example, this section originally had one more tip, but I had to delete one. Why? Knowing human nature as I do, I discerned that tattooing "Boogie Jack Believes In Me" on your forehead wasn't something many of you would do.

8.   Read what you've written out loud. It helps weed out awkward passages so you can rework the places that might trip people up.

9.   Strive for simplicity. Using language to excess may make you feel more serious as a writer, but simplicity is best understood by your readers. Use casual conversation as your guide.

10. Use a conversational tone. I respond best to casual writing, and I know for sure my ezine subscribers and folks that have bought my book respond well to my casual writing style. Many of them have told me as much - often! Beware though, there is sometimes a fine line between casual and coming across as indifferent or aloof.

11. Take it easy on the punctuation. If the object of writing is to create a smooth text flow, punctuation is the yield sign that causes us to pause. My biggest punctuation problem is, using, too, many, commas, don't you know!

12. Use lists where appropriate to assist in clarity. Break up long paragraphs full of comma delimited items and declare the items in a list when you can.

Use neutral bullets instead of numbers to reduce visual clutter - except where step-by-step instructions are being given or places like this where there is a named number of items (25 Writing Tips). Otherwise some people will sit there and count them to make sure they didn't get cheated out of one!

Make your lists easier to read by including a line space between items, especially if any list items wrap to two lines or more. If you double-space one list item, double-space them all.

13. When rewriting, weed out unnecessary words. Why say, "he was elated when he received the first order for his eBook," when, "his first eBook order elated him" says the same thing in half the words.

Instead of:	Write:
I am of the opinion that	I think
due to the fact that	because
in spite of the fact that	although
in close proximity to	near
in the near future	soon
in the neighborhood of	about

14. Got it? Good! Now if the teacher could just teach himself...

15. Write your eBook like the one you'd like to read if you were buying it. Create the product you couldn't find so others can benefit from your vision. That's how a lot of software product ideas are developed, by programmers who couldn't find products that did what they wanted.

16. If you only have 15 minutes or a half hour, that's hardly enough time to do any writing unless you're just jotting down an idea for later development. If that's all the time you have, use it to proofread and edit. Save the writing for when you have an hour or more to devote, that's when you can really get into it and lay down some serious gab.

17. Start each writing period by re-reading the last two or three pages of what you wrote the last time. This not only pulls you back into the material, but it can lead to improvements in what you've already written. It's a little like cheating and upgrading your first draft before it's finished.

18. If you're a slow starter, you might follow Ernest Hemingway's advice: stop writing at a point where you know what comes next. This will help you get off on the fast track the next day.

19. Many things that are intended to teach are dry and boring. Try to make your opening dialogue interesting. It can set the tone for your entire eBook. If it is interesting, they'll have a good first impression that can be sustained through the less than interesting passages.

On the other hand, if the opening dialogue gives a bad impression, your content will have to be doubly good to change the reader's initial impression.

20. Keep your work and progress private until you have confidence in it. Opening yourself up too soon to criticism or even to a lukewarm response when you're high on it can be a crushing blow.

21. When you finish one project, start another. Don't wait around to see how the previous one does. That might discourage you from writing. Everything you write isn't going to be a success, and as with anything else, good writing takes practice. If you're excited about a new project, a discouraging result from the previous project will be easier to take.

For that matter, choosing the best topics for you to write about takes practice too. I can brag that my first book was successful. If the full truth were told though, there was a lot of practice, a lot of topics that didn't resonate with readers, and a lot of, um...not so spectacular writing that preceded the book.

22. Take a class if you need one. It's amazing how many people there are who are trying to become writers with little grasp of language and a very limited vocabulary. If that hits home with you, at least learn a new word a day and use it, and study one grammar rule a week and practice it. You can do that online and it won't cost anything but a little time. It's an investment in your future. You can learn a new word a day at Wordsmith or via a free email subscription:

Wordsmith

23. To grow your writing skills, write often. You also might try emulating your favorite writers. Every now and then try to write a short fact or fiction article like you would envision one of your favorite authors might write it. You can learn new things that way. Just remember to return to your own style, assuming you'd rather be an original than an imitation.

24. Whatever method works for you is the right method, no matter what others tell you. However, one should always be open to exploring the new.

25. Perseverence is mandatory. You don't lose until you give up.

26. Try to leave out items that quickly become outdated, unless you intend to update it a lot. If you've got a good selling product but the contents are dated in a hurry, you lose a good income stream too soon.

22. 30 Ideas to Overcome Writer's Block

Some people can sit down and write just about anytime they want. I'm like that. Others have a harder time getting started. They're often looking at the immensity of the entire project instead of breaking it down into bite-sized chunks.

Yes, I can sit and stare at a blank screen with the best of them, but when I focus on a specific idea within the bigger topic, the words to express that idea tend to follow.

However, just about everyone has "writer's block" at one time or another. You may take comfort in the fact that some of the most famous writers in history suffered periods of an inability to write. Virgina Woolf, Ernest Hemingway, even Leo Tolstoy. You wouldn't suspect the author of the tome War and Peace would have ever suffered from writer's block, but he did.

Here are some ideas to help you breakout of a writing slump and get your fingers dancing on the keyboard.

1. **The Gibberish Factor**

   On the occasions when I do have a hard time getting started, I can often break the ice by just typing whatever words pop into my head. I might write a whole page or three of gibberish! But, the act of just writing loosens up the creativity and I soon find myself ready to write about the topic at hand.

   A side benefit is that sometimes the gibberish can turn into an article of merit. Some of my most popular ezine articles have came about as a result of being stuck and just typing whatever words popped into my head. If you need a more distinguished way to refer to it, it's also called "freewriting" by many. Being the cartoon that I am, I prefer calling it the Gibberish Factor.

Still not clear on how to write gibberish? I'm going to type a quick paragraph below of the first thoughts that pop into my head. I promise I will not change or correct anything.

The first thing I thought is that you'll read this and think I'm an idiot because it doesn't make sense. I don't care and that thinking is too structured. I should be telling you I like ice craem...too much! I want to sell my boat too, but we just bought it last year. My wife is happy withit but I'm not, it's too big to get intot he good fishing holes. My dog burps liek a human, it's retarded. When we put a sock on it's nose it runs around shaking it's head and it look like an elephoant waving its trunk. Too bad it couldn't go ??? - dang, how do you write a noise like the sound an elephant makes/ toot toot!

See? Nonsense and random thoughts. Typing mistakes, incorrect punctuation, poor sentence structure. All that doesn't matter one bit. It's just an exercise to get into the flow. It also gave me an idea for the next homily in of one of my ezines. I'm going to tell about some of my dog's goofy traits. You've just witnessed one of the benefits of the Gibberish Factor in action!

2. **Be a Note Taker**

Ideas may come when you're walking the dog, shopping, talking to a neighbor, even in bed when you're asleep...in other words, at any moment and without warning. When you have a project in the works, always carry a pad and pen around with you so you can jot down any ideas you have. When you're stuck in the writing process, it's often because you don't know where to begin at the moment. You can refer to your notes to get the old think box a thinking.

3. **Schedule Your Work and Work Your Schedule**

If you work better under a structured environment, set aside a certain time each day to write. It helps some folks to anticipate the writing process and have the expectation of making progress during a time set aside specifically

for writing. Make sure family members know that is your time to work, and request they not disturb you unless it's an emergency.

4. **What Color is Your Wall**

Simply writing gibberish as I do to get your creativity flowing is hard for some people. If you're one of them, try picking out something in the room and start writing about it. It might be the color of the wall, the dog or cat, a song you're listening to - it really doesn't matter as long as it's something you can express your ideas and thoughts about.

Writing about an object or writing gibberish is simply an exercise to start the flow of creativity. When you're looking at a blank computer screen or blank sheet of paper it likes to stare back at you. It may even taunt you, saying you have nothing to write about. That's the inner censor again. We all have one. Mine is a blue troll.

Tell yours to take a flying leap by starting to write down whatever comes to mind. When the fingers start typing, the brain usually follows and your little troll goes back into hiding. Once that happens, you can switch to writing your product content.

A quick side note: never let that inner censor out during the writing process. Your censor is an idiot when it comes to creativity. Your censor may save you from making the mistake of telling your wife that it looks like she's gaining weight or your husband that his hair is falling out, but the censor will shoot your creativity in the heart if given the opportunity.

5. **A Grown Up's Diary**

If writing gibberish or about an object isn't your cup of alphabet soup, try keeping a journal. You can always write about what happened that day, or what you did, who you saw, how you felt, etc.

A side benefit is that you may learn a lot about yourself. You may recognize strengths you can put to work in areas of life where you're not using them fully, you may find weaknesses you can improve upon, or any number of things that will help you grow as a person. Oftentimes, the more you grow as a person, the better you write.

6. **Review and Renew**

Reread your research material, your notes, and what you've already written. This should stimulate a lot of thought avenues. Start writing them down. This often spurs me on to the point that I don't notice the hours passing until I've written thousands of words.

7. **Divide and Conquer**

Start another project. Sometimes it helps to have two or more projects going at once. In addition to my web site content and eBooks, I also write 6 - 8 ezine issues a month, plus articles to submit to other publications. I find there's always something I'm able to work on. You also may want to simply try working on another part of your project. Perhaps you're just temporarily stymied by one content area, but will find writing in another content area comes easier.

8. **Make a Paper Storm**

Draw a cloud in the middle of a sheet of paper and put your main topic in the center of the cloud. Next, make a bolt of lightning come out from the cloud. At the end of the lightning bolt draw a little energy explosion and write a thought about your main topic inside it. Keep doing this until you've created a big storm. You should have plenty idea flashes to work with by then.

If lightning isn't excite-ning for you, use raindrops and puddles instead. If you think that idea is all wet, try making the ground your main topic and have flowers hold your thoughts. Call it Idea Gardening - hey, that's a cool term. Maybe that will be my next eBook. Don't steal that from me!

The point is, this is a brainstorming activity that helps loosen you up by clustering ideas together. It gets you thinking with ideas instead of words. This also works for creating an outline or table of contents, and it's a good exercise to invite others into who would be willing to help you brainstorm.

9. **Rock On**

   Play some favorite music. The ebb and flow of the music can carry you from your analytical nature to your creative nature.

10. **Under Interrogation**

    Ask yourself questions. It's an old writing trick to interrogate yourself. Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? What's the purpose? What does this mean? Why does this work like it does? What if someone did that? Where will this lead? It helps narrow your focus from a big picture down to specifics, which can lead to a starting point to begin writing.

11. **Lend Me Your Ear**

    Talk to a spouse or someone else that is supportive. Talking helps sort thoughts verbally, which can get the creativity flowing.

12. **A Walk in the Park**

    Get some exercise. It's a proven fact that exercise stimulates thought. Take a notebook with you. All the fresh blood pumping to your brain will give you ideas. It needn't be strenuous exercise, going for a brisk walk can do the trick. As Raymond Inmon once wrote, "If you are seeking creative ideas, go out walking. Angels whisper to a man when he goes for a walk." I'm betting that applies to women too!

13. **Shake Off the Days Dust**

    If you have a day job and will be writing in your spare time, take some time to relax after work. Have supper with the family, play with the kids, read a little,

anything to shake the day's dust off before you try writing. To go from one job right to another can be stressful enough to dampen creativity.

14. **Get a Life**

Take time to live! While television, the Internet, radio and other media can keep us up on local and world events, those are all someone else's experiences and views. We need to get out in nature, go places, talk to people, ponder the mysteries of the universe, marvel at a cloud formation, wade in a creek, spend time with loved ones, go fishing, pursue our hobbies and so on, to feel fully alive. Make sure you spend enough time at that. It's easy to get so caught up in getting ahead that you get behind in just living.

Impatient types often miss this important part of life. They're always in a hurry to get something done and don't really spend enough time just living and being. Remember, it's better to turn out a great product in six months than a bad product in one.

15. **Back to School**

Study your subject more. It could be that what seems like writer's block is, in reality, a lack of understanding of the subject matter.

16. **Girls (and Boys) Just Want to Have Fun**

Feed your creative side.

- Play a game
- draw a picture
- color in a coloring book
- pick a random word and find words that rhyme with it, or find how many other words you can create from it
- read a joke book
- do a crossword puzzle
- paint a paint-by-numbers kit

- make up funny sounding words
- surf art sites on the web

Do whatever it takes to wake up the creative side of your brain.

17. **Hold On Loosely**

Don't force it, if it won't come, let go of it for a little while. We're always anxious to see our projects take shape and worked through to completion. Remind yourself that time is your ally and there is no deadline. It's your project, managed under your timeline. No one is standing over your shoulder monitoring your progress and beating you to get you going - except maybe yourself. Let go of it for a while if you have to, you can come back to it one day. In the meantime, start something else.

A side note to this tip: many in the writing and publishing business advise to finish writing everything you start. Sometimes an idea just doesn't work for one reason or another. I'm of the opinion that if the horse is dead and you know it, get off the darn thing. There is no sin in abandoning a dead project. However, if you routinely abandon writing projects, then you need to examine your modus operandi.

18. **A Horse of Another Color**

If the horse isn't dead, keep feeding it. If you only manage one paragraph today, that will have to do. If you throw that paragraph out tomorrow, that will have to do, too. You will have rooted out one idea that didn't work. Once you get rid of the ideas that don't work, the ones that are left are the ones that work!

19. **A Wink for a Nudge**

Sign up for the daily writing prompt from About .com. Each day you'll receive an email with a writing exercise. You have 10 minutes to write a "freewriting"

style response. It's a daily exercise that can help you develop a write-at-will mentality.

Writer Exchange

20. A One and a Two

Create two lists. In list one, write down all the reasons you want to write. In list two, write down all the reasons you can think of that you can't. Be honest with yourself. You may find that the reasons for not writing overpower your reasons for writing.

If that happens, you can accept that you really don't want to write after all; or, build up your reasons for wanting to write, and tear down your reasons for not writing by listing why the reasons you're not writing are not valid or acceptable to you.

The act of creating the list, or the process of tearing down your reasons for not writing, or the visual of seeing more reasons for writing than against writing may loosen you up.

21. This Doesn't Look Like Kansas, Toto

Change your work environment. If you're stuck sitting at your computer try taking a pad and pencil to a park. Sometimes a change of scenery is all that's needed. An alternative to that is to go buy a new picture for your work space wall, or a new plant or knickknack for the shelf, or perhaps rearrange your office.

22. Instant Karma

This is my favorite because it's an idea that is so deceptively simple it's laughable. Don't laugh though, because it works like a charm, just complete this exercise:

- Write one word about your subject.

- Use that word in a sentence.
- Use that sentence in a paragraph.

If you've done that, you've started writing, and on topic, too. It may not be great, but don't fix it now. Repeat the process and keep writing. Your writer's block is broken.

23. My Kingdom for a Segue

Be flexible. Sometimes we're not blocked, it's something we've written that is causing problems because it doesn't lead us into the next thought. If something just doesn't work, consider rewriting it or toss the idea out.

24. An Imaginary Friend

Instead of writing TO your computer screen or notebook, write as though you're talking to a friend. Sometimes the personalization tears down the walls of blockage. You can even imagine the friend asking you questions and you answering them. Your friend can be someone you know and respect, someone you wish you knew, someone completely imaginary, or even your higher self.

This can also be a great way to get new ideas to write about within your topic. You should pick a friend that will ask intelligent questions though. Having cousin Emo ask you what color blue is probably won't do a lot toward breaking writer's block.

25. No Nervous Break Down

If your project is big it can seem overwhelming. Break it down into little writing jobs. It's much easier to attack a two page section of content than a 100 page eBook.

26. Reflect and Disconnect

Disconnect from your ego. If you fear what others will think of your work, that's your ego talking to you big time. Disconnect. Write like you're writing

an instruction manual for yourself so that you have one place to look up the information you need. Remember, no one has to see it until you're ready to show it.

27. **Bad Student Fun**

Lower your standards. There's no reason to be concerned about what anyone thinks of your writing until the final revision. Until then, have some "bad student" fun. Don't correct anything, leave goofy notes to yourself in parenthesis as you write (Dennis - remember to buy new boxer shorts tomorrow), intentionally misspell wErds - write as poorly as you can for a page or ten pages. You can fix it all up later, but in the meantime, you're getting ideas down on paper. The idea is, instead of being stuck and having it seem like a chore, have some fun with it. Fun can start the creative juice flowing.

28. **The Rites of Passage**

Develop a writing ritual. A writing ritual, once established, can ease you into a writing frame of mind each time you sit down to work. It can be a single act or a combination of things, such as:

- Getting your favorite pen and a pleasing drink.
- Do breathing exercises, muscle tensing and relaxation, and/or stretching exercises.
- Close your eyes and visualize yourself writing.
- Write and recite your own mantra.
- Remind yourself whatever you write is only a rough draft.
- Put on your favorite comfy old clothes.
- Pet the dog or cat for good luck.
- Walk around the block.
- Kiss and hug your children, remind yourself it's for them too.

Stand on your head, call yourself Fred, dye your hair red, just don't go to bed and wake up dead! In other words, your ritual can be anything you want it to be, just so it's something you're comfortable with.

29.**Reverse Engineering**

Write a one-sentence idea about your product on paper with your dominant hand. Then write a paragraph embellishing on that idea with your other hand. (If your right-handed, write out the sentence with your right hand and the paragraph with your left hand.) A very wise lady told me this gives your brain permission to think outside the box, which is where creativity makes her home.

30.**If That Doesn't Work**

It's possible none of those suggestions will work for you. If that happens to you and you still want to write, try to invent your own cure. There is no one-size-fits-all cure for writer's block. It's a personal problem with a personal cause, and the cure can be different for everyone.

If forcing a banana in your floppy disk drive breaks writer's block for you then go buy a bunch of bananas, and maybe some spare floppy disk drives. There are no rules or standards to breaking writer's block, so don't be afraid to experiment with different techniques. Mix and match the suggestions above, add your own twist to them, or invent something entirely new.

23.   Some Causes of Writer's Block

It may help you to break writer's block by understanding its cause. While there can be nearly as many causes and cures as there are writers suffering from writer's block, there are some common reasons people find it hard to write:

- **Not Letting an Idea Simmer and Stew Long Enough**

When an idea strikes, the immediate urge is to sit down and capture it on paper. I work that way. However, sometimes rushing to write before an idea has finished developing can actually hinder the writing process. Step back and let the idea simmer and stew, some things need to slow cook.

- **No outline**

Many writers feel that having no outline dooms the writing from the beginning. Even if it's just a few lines or a temporary table of contents like I use, an outline is essential for most writers. If you don't map a path you may find yourself lost and wandering aimlessly.

- **Too many distractions**

Look around. Are the kids screaming? Is the neighbor's dog barking incessantly? Does the phone keep ringing? Do you have things that need to be done that you've put off but keep thinking about? Perhaps you need a quieter place to work or need to take care of unfinished business before you can concentrate on writing.

- **Boredom**

If the subject truly bores you to the point where it's difficult to write about, consider changing topics. If it bores you, think of what you may do to your intended audience.

- **Sporadic work habits**

Ideally, you should work on your project at least an hour every day, even if you end up deleting everything you write. Writing is serious business. Waiting for the inspiration is a sure way to never finish your project. Take your mission seriously and work even when you don't feel like it.

If you can't write every day, at least work out a writing schedule and try to stick with it. The more often you do work on it, the easier it will be for you because you remain attuned to the project. Perhaps that why I'm one of those that can sit down and write at any time, because I write for hours every day.

- **Sick and Tired**

One problem part time writers have is that many of them have to go to a job where they work at a computer, and by the time they're off work, they're tired of sitting at a computer and typing. If that's your situation, try going to bed earlier and getting up an hour or two earlier and write before work. Or write the old fashioned way, with a pen and paper in comfortable surroundings.

Be sure to get enough rest though, as being physically fatigued can also mean mental fatigue, which can make it harder to write.

- **Fear of Criticism**

As writers, we pour a part of ourselves into our work. Any criticism can sting! Remember that you can't please everyone. No matter what you write there will be people who don't see the value. It's enough to write to please yourself. If you can do that, others will like what you've written - but not everyone. Not everyone likes Edgar Allan Poe, Danielle Steele, Shakespeare, or any writer.

I distinctly remember one time when I added a new humor page to my site. The first letter I received about was from a guy telling me I should stick to HTML tutorials and graphics because I wasn't funny. The next letter I received was from a woman who said it was the funniest thing she'd ever read. Go figure.

There will always be those who don't like what you write and aren't shy about telling you so. Get over it, you're in good company.

- **Depression**

Depression can negatively affect the creative processes. If you've recently lost a loved one, if someone close to you is hurt or sick, or if you've suffered any other kind of emotional or material loss or setback, you may need to finish dealing with that before you can get back to writing.

On the other hand, writing can be a healing way to deal with setbacks and losses. If you can't write within your project, maybe writing a private letter to yourself about your loss or setback will put your healing on the fast track.

- **Natural Rhythm**

Some writers are very prolific and can write year round. Others may have a natural rhythm, and you may not be in your rhythm cycle. That doesn't mean you can't write when you're not in your cycle, it just means you may have to learn to simulate it or stimulate it.

- **Lack of Understanding of the Writing Process**

Some people feel that writing is a gift that can only be used when the gift allows. When they can't write, they wait for their mojo to return. While some people may seem to have a more natural ability to write, a gift if you want to call it that, writing is also an exercise in discipline and perseverance. You don't have to wait until the mojo says, "go, Joe."

- **You Have a Case of the Imposter Syndrome**

Sometimes people feel because they haven't done something, they're faking it when they try. If you're on your first writing project, especially if you expect to be paid for your words, it's a very easy trap to fall into. You're not faking it. If you're writing, you're a writer. If it sells, you're a professional writer. Everyone

starts off the same, as an unpublished writer. Notice I didn't say an unpublished faker.

24. What NOT to Do When You Can't Write

- ## Don't Beat Yourself Up Over It

It happens to everyone. Don't call yourself names, belittle what you've done, magnify what you haven't done, or otherwise think of yourself negatively because you aren't producing. There is no reason to cast blame on yourself and torture your soul. Self-abuse only makes it worse, and is inappropriate anyway.

- ## Don't Give Up Your Dream Forever

Step back for a while if you must, but don't abandon your hopes and dreams. It could be that the timing just isn't right at the moment. Perhaps you have another life lesson or two to learn before you transition. Of course, as I mentioned earlier, don't be afraid to get off of a dead horse either. But if you're killing too many horses consider that you might give up too easily.

- ## Don't Create Artificial Pressure

Demanding of yourself that you must write 500 words today, or must finish your eBook by a fixed date, only adds to the problem rather than helps to alleviate it. You can work TO a certain time or for a scheduled time period, but don't pre-determine how much should be done by the end of that time. You'll reach 500 words when you get there, and the piece will be finished when it's finished.

- ## Don't Demand Perfection from Pain

The temptation is to want to make the project that vexed us for so long, so utterly brilliant that it makes all the trouble vanish in the face of perfection. It's never going to be perfect, anything you write can always be better.

I've written a lot about quality in this guide, but I never once said to make anything perfect. Perfection is an illusion. Chasing after it will only delay the end and leave you feeling more frustrated than before. You have to recognize the point of diminishing returns.

The world is but a school of research. The question is not who shall hit the ring, but who shall run the best course.
- Michel de Montaigne

When all else fails, remember, you can always return to further research when you're having trouble writing so the time isn't a loss.

25. Creating a Title that SELLS

You've already got a quick list of possible titles from your working titles list. Now add as many more titles to that list as you can think of. Don't leave anything out at this point, even a bad title may give you a good idea later when you review the list.

You can mix and match the ideas and come up with several titles, then test to see which title has the most appeal. You can also go the keywords suggestion sites mentions earlier and type in keywords to get new ideas. They work really well for that!

Even better, using an online thesaurus can help you find synonyms for words in your working titles that can lead to that perfect title. My favorite:

Thesaurus.com

You'll find more listed in the resources section of this guide.

The title you choose can be a matter of exceptional importance in the marketing success of any product. A poorly crafted title will simply not draw the reader in to investigate your product near as well as a great title.

You should consider the title of your product as an advertisement headline. It determines whether or not people will look into whatever your product is all about. You may have the best sales copy in the world on your sales page, but you've wasted your time if your title doesn't interest anyone in reading your message.

The title should signal what the main benefit of the product would be. Look at the titles of these real eBook products:

- 30 Minutes ... To Get Your Own Way

- Make Your Net Auction Sell
- E-Commerce for the Unfunded
- The Directory Of Low Cost, Private Opt-In Mailings
- Banner Design Tactics Exposed
- 52 Sure Fire Ways to Improve Your Online Business
- Scientific Advertising
- Erotic Dreams and Satin Sheets
- How to Get Started as a Karaoke Host
- Pay Per Click Search Engine Secrets Revealed
- The Three Vital Ministries of the Average Christian

What do all these titles have in common? The common thread is that it's pretty obvious what you're getting by the title. Anyone with an interest in a particular topic would have a hard time resisting learning more about the product. At that point, they change from casual surfer to potential customer. That's when your sales page or sales letter has to take over to finish the job.

An effective title will:

- Arouse curiosity and attract attention,
- Spell out a strong benefit,
- Answer every customers question (What's in it for me?),
- Set the mood for the sales pitch,
- Target the right audience.

Let's break down the title of this eBook:

eBook Farming: How to Grow Money Selling Your Words and Ideas.

- The opening two words, *eBook Farming*, arouse curiosity because no one but me knows what eBook Farming is.
- Their curiosity is satisfied in the sub-title, which as you'll see below, starts off with one of the best attention getting phrases known to advertising, "how to."

- The main benefit and the "what's in it for me lure" is satisfied by indicating the potential customer can learn how to make money selling his words and ideas. I used the term "grow money" because it tied in with the "farming" idea.
- The title targets people with ideas and people that want to make more money, and who doesn't think they have good ideas and want to make more money? That also sets the mood for the sales pitch because people want to know how they can make money selling their words and ideas. If my sales copy is good, I should have a good conversion rate.
- To summarize: a person has their curiosity aroused if they read just the first two words, which cause them to read the sub-title. They see that what's in it for them is a way for people to make money. They see they might be the right kind of person to make money because they have ideas, and the stage is set for my sales copy to turn them into a customer. This title gives this product broad appeal.
- There are several powerful words and phrases that are used time and time again in advertisements. They keep popping up because they act like human magnets that instantly attract consumers with an interest in your topic to read more, especially when they are combined with a topical keyword. The three most important magnetic words and phrases are:
- Free
- How to
- You
- And several other effective words and phrases:
- Announcing
- The Secret to (of)
- The Truth About...
- New
- Now
- First
- Amazing
- Breakthrough

- Discover or Discovery
- Only
- Do You
- Sale
- At Last
- Bargain
- Complete
- Save or Savings
- The Best
- Feel
- Look
- Never Again
- Fantastic
- Don't
- Learn
- Little Known
- Exposed

Using one or more of these magnetic words or phrases along with your main product benefit can create a compelling title. If you were interested in the topic, wouldn't these titles catch your attention:

- Feel Your Best, Look Your Best Health and Beauty Secrets
- Learn the Truth About Your Job Applicants
- Amazing Breakthrough, Never Again Let Rust Ruin Your Car
- How to Design a Foolproof Marketing Plan
- New! The Most Complete Guide to Legal Tax Shelters Ever Created

If you desire to look and feel better, I'll bet you'd read more about the first title. If you were an employer concerned with hiring quality and qualified employees, the second title would cause you to take notice, and so on.

Further points to consider concerning your title:

- Avoid titles that do not tie into the product or the benefit of using the product, or the reader may feel misled and stop reading your sales pitch. No reader reading, no seller selling.
- Use words that create mental images, "Trophy Buck" is more appealing to a hunter than plain old "'Deer" would be.
- The title should appeal to a feeling or sensation; love, hate, fear, desire, curiosity, etc.
- Use present tense, not past or future tense. It adds impact and immediacy to the title and makes it more believable.
- Use verbs that are powerful and exciting. If you were selling stereos, "Amazing Sound Quality" is more exciting than "High Quality Sound."
- Eliminate all unnecessary words. It's a title, not the whole eBook.
- Don't try to be too clever. Make the eBook the focus, not your imagination. Simplicity sells.

When my partner and I were brainstorming the name for our new Background Magic software, we chose that name because it conveyed a simple message with a touch of mystery to it. A too clever title might have been Background Playground. That's catchy and has a certain ring to it, but it doesn't arouse curiosity as well.

Here's how I came up with the title for this eBook. I asked my ezine subscribers for suggestions and offered a free copy to the person that came up with the title I used. I received 153 submissions, none of which I used. But, one suggestion gave me the idea for the title I did use. I gave that person a copy of the eBook and offered everyone else an unannounced 40% discount. The unannounced discount makes those who submitted a title but didn't win a free copy a reason not to be too discouraged, but instead to have something to be happy about.

That's a new thing called Customer Relations Management (CRM) in the upper echelons of big business. I call it simply doing the right thing, and it's about time big corporations started learning how to put a little old-fashioned common sense into their business!

Sell the Sizzle

Remember to sell the sizzle in your title. Benefits are the sizzle. They are the elements of the product that provide the answers and solve the problems. A feature is a fact about the product that builds credibility, such as; it's 130 pages long, it has 15 illustrations and 8 graphs, the statistics used are from the US Census Bureau, etc.

Both features and benefits are necessary. But benefits are what you want to emphasize in your title. Benefits entice, build interest, and help seal the deal.

Why?

People predominately act on their emotions. Benefits help bring out emotions. They make a decision to buy with their emotions and if necessary, then justify their decision with logic and reason. Using a "feelings" based benefit in the title helps put them into a "maybe I'll buy this" frame of mind. The feeling the title of this eBook appealed to was the longing or desire to have more money.

Remember, the first two words of the title of this arouses curiousity immediately. eBook Farming, a person thinks, what's that? Then I offer the sizzle in the subtitle: How to Grow Money Selling Your Words and Ideas. Money for your words and ideas is the sizzle. There are four strong hooks in the title, curiosity and money. The third hook is in the word "your" because it puts the reader into the the title. The fourth hook is the mighty "how to" phrase, because it tells them the answers are within the product.

Here is an exercise that will help you create a strong, benefit oriented title and give you plenty of ammunition to work into your sales pitch.

Once your eBook is written, print it out and go through each section one paragraph at a time. Put yourself in your customer's shoes and list all the benefits you can think of, great and small, to owning your product. I say to print it out because it often gives you a new perspective to see it on paper. On a separate

piece of paper, list all the benefits and features, and remember, you're trying to see it from a customers point of view.

Now that you've made your list of benefits and features, asking your spouse, friends, relatives, and trusted associates to do the same thing can give you fantastic new insights if they're willing to help. If they're not, consider paying them to motivate them. Offer them a bounty for each benefit they can come up with that you don't have listed. You might be surprised how well that will motivate them to find benefits that you overlooked!

When you're done, you may have far more benefits and features than you might have guessed. If others helped, add their findings to your list. Now go back over them. Study them. Check off the most important ones. New ideas may jump out at you, add them to the list. The title may jump out at you too, or your USP.

Your USP is your Unique Selling Position. Once you discover your USP it can be your key to beating the competition. It is often the primary benefit, but it also may be a complementary benefit that your product has that your competitor's product doesn't. It may even simply be the fact that yours has the lowest price of products of its kind.

It could be something you thought of right way, or something you really had to work to discover. I never promised any of this would be absent-mindedly simple, but I will say the harder you work, the luckier you'll get! Many marketers overlook or never look for their USP. Those who find one often have the winning edge.

And don't think you're not a marketer. We market ourselves every day; at work, at home, everywhere we go we're selling ourselves to others. With your eBook you're going to become a product marketer as well, unless you're willing to pay someone else to do the marketing for you.

From your list of benefits and features, you'll have several ideas to help write the sales copy for your web page. Be sure to fill the copy with the benefits of owning your product. Make some mention of the features to give it credibility, but don't

overdo it. You might even list the features on a side bar rather than in the sales copy, and keep the sales copy full of benefits and sizzle.

Increased competition and marketing clutter demand a distinctive and intelligent name that clearly defines and distinguishes the product. - Alf Nucifora

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Has your title came into focus yet? You probably have several names to choose from. If you can't decide if which title is best, or if you don't have confidence in your choice, take what you consider your top 5 titles and ask people which title appeals to them most. If you asked 100 people you should have a good idea of which will be most effective. If you asked 50 you'll have a pretty fair idea.

The point is, ask as many people as you can, within reason. You don't have to ask in person if you have a web site or ezine. You could poll your audience and offer a free copy in a random drawing as the prize. If you don't have an ezine or web site, you could offer a prize or prizes in a random drawing to an ezine publisher, and all people have to do is email you with the name that appeals to them most to be entered into the drawing.

If you do that, find an ezine with content related to, but not in competition with, the content of your eBook. Stay away from ezines that do not have related content though. You don't want people that have never heard of a spread sheet choosing the best name for your eBook on how to analyze statistical data. It doesn't make sense. You want people that are knowledgeable in your product area voting for the most marketable name.

Don't just simply ask people which name appeals to them the most. They might pick one for other reasons than marketability. Ask them, "if you had to buy an eBook about (insert your topic here) and the only information you have to base your decision on is the name of it, which of the following titles would you buy

first?" If you get a large enough response that should give you a good idea of what will work best. Just don't overwhelm them with too many title choices or they'll tire of the list and just pick one at random.

Another way to determine the best title is to test market the eBook under different titles. I can't go into a long tutorial on how to test market here, but I will give you some basics. You can run the same ad in various ezines, only changing the title of the product, and send prospects to a different web page for each ad. Each ezine should appeal to the same kind of audience.

Each page you send them to will also have the same copy, with the title of the eBook being the only difference. Then you count how many click-throughs each title received, factor in the difference in the number of subscribers to each ezine, and to take it a step further, determine the sales per click-through ratio of each title. This will give you a vote from wallets and purses on which title will sell the best.

There is one thing to bear in mind as you finalize your product title. You must avoid using other companies trademarks and tradenames. A tradename is a name used to identify a business entity. A trade name is not a trademark, but it can function as one when a company's trademark is the same as their tradename.

To make this all easy to understand, simply try to avoid using names that are already in use, or are close enough to another name to cause confusion between the two. For example, if you invented a new soft drink and called it Coca-Kola, that would probably bring the Coke-Cola attorneys a calling.

You can research trademarks and tradenames at the United States Patent and Trademark Office site:

USPTO

There are many places that will do the research for you, for a fee of course. The most sure way to know you're safe is to hire an attorney, but that's expensive. I'd guess that many people never even do a trademark/tradename search. I do a quick

one at the above site and consider it a good faith effort and move on if it appears clear. I haven't had any problems yet using that method, knock on my head (wood).

26.   Free eBooks and Viral Marketing

On the Internet, viral marketing is the holy grail. Viral marketing, in simple terms, is when a product is so useful, so good, or designed so cleverly, that other people do the marketing for you. In a sense, it's a digital twist on a basic business truth - that word of mouth is the best advertising.

A prosperous future belongs to those that can learn how to cause others to market for them. A single idea that takes off can launch an almost endless wave of traffic to your site. Sometimes, this is accomplished in the form a free eBook. With a good product that doesn't cost anything, people are often happy to tell others about it because there is little risk involved.

Spam, and other forms of interruption marketing just aren't very welcomed on the Internet. Marketing that causes people to market to their friends on your behalf is the best kind of marketing because it's simply the most user friendly way to get the word out.

Quality eBooks about desirable topics build traffic easily because of the consumer's relationships with other consumers. When you give them permission to pass it on, and it's good material, they often will pass it on. In that sense, it is like a virus, it spreads from person to person.

In other words, the secret of viral marketing is to stop marketing AT people and find a way to cause people to market to each other on your behalf. In a sense, it's very much like a fad. Fads catch on not because they're advertised heavily, but because people pick up what others are into and get into it themselves to gain a sense of belonging and approval. At it's best, a free eBook would become a community of users that draw more and more into the inner circle.

Your main task then, in causing others to market your product for you is to convince them that it's the in thing, an idea whose time has come. People like to be on the cutting edge of a new trend rather than the last one on the bandwagon.

They also don't want to be the one to sound off for a loser because it can mean a loss of status and power within their circle. The trick is to convince them your product is a winner, and to design elements into it that makes it seem low risk for them to tell others about it.

This might be in the form of direct rewards or incentives, it may be that it's simply very useful and you encourage others to give it away (and they do), it could be offered as an freebie or incentive for taking other actions - for example, you could let ezine publishers give it away as an incentive for people to subscribe to their ezine.

Another incentive is to allow people to co-brand your eBook. Some eBook compilers have features that allow others to cobrand only the parts you let them. This can be a powerful incentive to non-creative types who seek a product of their own to offer.

The most successful viral product in history is Hotmail.

- Hotmail grew a subscriber base faster than any company ever has before. This includes all magazines, newspapers, etc.
- In its first 18 months they acquired over 12 million users.

Hotmail did advertise at first, but most of their success can be traced to that one little ad that is placed at the end of every email sent from a Hotmail account offering free email accounts.

```
---------------------------------------------------------------------
              Get your private, free email at http://www.hotmail.com
---------------------------------------------------------------------
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Because the recipient knew that the sender was a Hotmail user, it's like an endorsement for Hotmail every time an email is sent. In effect, each Hotmail user becomes a company salesperson, and the message spreads like a virus.

Another example of viral marketing is the "recommend this site" links or "send this article" links you see at various web sites. Click a link, enter an email address, and the site or article is sent to a friend. An example of viral marketing at it's worst are those blasted computer virus (hoax) messages that say to "pass this on to everyone in your address book," and most of the newbies do.

To see how explosive viral marketing can be, look at the "heads" below showing how many people are brought into the promotion if each person tells just two others.

<pre>
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See how rapidly that spreads? Image that when it's 50 layers deep! It can be amazing.

Unfortunately, viral marketing is still very much a mystery. Most of the products that have caught on virally have been unintentional hits. I wish I could tell you how to accomplish making your product viral-worthy, but I can't. There is no step 1, step 2 process that I know of.

I can tell you one sure thing about a free product: if it isn't worth selling, it has little chance of ever becoming a viral product even when you give it away.

Whatever eBook you try to give away to create a traffic virus, it would have to be a product that could be sold. I've attempted to make this product viral worthy by:

- Making it as good of a product as I could (essential).

- Offering it as an affiliate program.

Will that work? I don't know, but one known fact is that it's much harder to create a commercial product that is also viral in nature than it is a free product, so I'm not counting on it.

Most people that would recommend your product will feel a sense of responsibility to whomever they tell about it if their friend has to buy the product. If he or she does convince a friend to try your product, and the friend doesn't have a positive experience with it, the person making the recommendation will feel a personal responsibility for that. So, if it's a product that costs money, getting them to market for you is made harder.

This means that you have to strongly emphasize your product's unique qualities to your customers, provide strong benefits with it, and offer it at a fair price. This has always been an important part of traditional marketing, but it is doubly important if you want your customers to recommend your product. How that applies to this eBook, one that teaches how to make money creating eBooks, is that the potential for good will hopefully outweighs the risk of recommending it. After all, if you recommend a product that helps someone else make money and improves their lifestyle, that person is going to be quite happy with you!

Word-of-mouth marketing requires that your customers have faith and trust in YOU. A person may ignore a thousand advertisements for a product, but when a friend recommends it, they listen. But no one is going to spread the word about your eBook as a favor to you. Your product must instill trust in you if it is to become a product people recommend. This takes us back once again to building a top quality product. Me-too mediocre products will not induce much trust, will not catch fire, and will not cause peer-to-peer marketing.

This means you must build sincerity and trust into your product, your marketing campaign, and your affiliate program if it's a commercial product. That's one reason, that in the affiliate section of this eBook, you'll see that I recommend using a 3rd party for monitoring and management if you set up an affiliate program.

Sure, that may cost you a little more per sale, but you'll most likely make up for it in volume. You'll have more people recommending it for you because your affiliate program will be deemed instantly credible because of the 3rd party management. It also can leave you with more free time to promote your product because you can automate the whole process.

A customer can decide to buy your product, purchase it online, and have instant access to it. You don't have to be involved at any step in the process, which leaves you plenty of free time to promote it and work on other projects. The 3rd party will mail you a check once a month (for the one I use, others may differ). That's way cool.

Here are what I believe are seven key elements to a successful viral marketing product:

1. "Free" is the most powerful word in the marketing dictionary. Most successful viral programs offer valuable products or services at no cost as a way of attracting attention. Once you have their attention they may buy an upgrade, or other products or services from you. Your upgrade or other products may be an easier sale to make because they already have some trust in you from your valuable free product.
2. Ask your users to subscribe to something. It might be an ezine, or just an announcement list for you to announce new products. Many of them will, and that gives you permission to market your new products to them.

Some businesses require an email address from a customer before they are given access to the free program. They do this to acquire as many names as possible. I have a general distaste with this method, although it does work. My problem with it is that you're asking users for personal details before they've had a chance to examine your product and before many of them trust you.

Some people simply will not try it, others will give phony email addresses or throw away email addresses, and you end up with a bunch of useless email addresses from people that didn't want to be on your mailing list that you'll have to weed out from your list. You'll receive angry mail from others who didn't

expect to be "spammed," and some will make a much bigger fuss about it than you would have imagined, which may do harm to your reputation.

I prefer letting a user opt in to a list from within the product. It's more fair to them, and gives you a cleaner list that is more likely to be more responsive, plus it saves you a lot of time and grief over marketing to a list full of addresses of people that don't want to be on your list in the first place.

3.   It is easy to "catch" the virus. In other words, you must make it easy for others to spread the word about your product. A one-click-to-send-it link, copy and paste text for affiliates, ready graphics with instructions on how to download them and link to your site, and pre-written messages so all someone has to do is copy and paste are all ways of making it as easy as possible for others to spread the word for you.

4.   It must be sustainable. For example, if you have a web site design and hosting company and offer a free custom web site template inside your wonderful web site design tips eBook for all new sign ups, are you going to be able to keep up with the requests if you all of a sudden get 500 orders? By the time you make 30 or 40 templates there will be enough others tired of waiting that they'll back out and probably tell others how you don't live up to your promises, recommending to people they know that they NOT use your service. Just the opposite of what you wanted.

5.   Market to common motivations and behavior. For a while you were seeing "This web site best viewed with..." blurbs all over the web. It was a dumb idea to begin with, but one person saw it on what they considered a cool site and put it on theirs. Before long it became the "in" thing. The hunger to be liked, to have a sense of belonging, and to feel a part of the happening people is universal.

6.   A good marketing plan makes use of existing communication networks. The majority of people are social animals to one degree or another. A person may have 6 - 20 people in their inner circle, and an even broader audience with which they have less influence, but it's an audience just the same. A very social person might have access to hundreds or thousands of people through ezines, club functions, memberships, etc.

Network marketers have long understood the power of the referral. Mary Kay Cosmetics, Watkins, Amway, and other successful companies were largely built by taking advantage of these human networks. People on the Internet develop networks of relationships, too. They are often larger and more geographically diverse than person to person networks, and that's only good news for the marketer that learns how to put these human networks to use.

One way to put human networks to use is to seek out other free eBook publishers. Offer to make their eBook available to your audience if they'll do the same for you. Not only does it help get the word out for you, but it gives a valuable new content area where you can offer dozens of free eBooks. Just be careful of who you choose to partner with. If they are not ethical and do not offer quality products, you could be tainted with the same brush.

7.   Never advocate or allow spamming on your behalf. It could ruin the whole shebang. If you make an affiliate program of your product, this must be spelled out clearly.

If it's possible for your product idea, you might consider creating different versions of your product, with each version focusing on one specific demographic or psychographic group.

A demographic consists of all the people in a particular group such as all men, all women, all over 65, people who are bald, etc. Psychographics is the study of people with a certain attitude or lifestyle, such as sky jumpers, punk rockers, Christians, and so on.

If your product is geared toward some type of demographic or psychographic group, you may find targeting potential buyers much easier.

Here are some other ideas to help make your product viral-worthy:

- This is more to promote a web site, but getting them there is half the battle. Once they are there, you can try to sell your products. The idea is to start your own free email service offering free email accounts at your domain. It's easier

than you think. You can put your own ad at the bottom of each email sent, just like Hotmail did. That ad could be for your eBook. You won't get the same results Hotmail did because it's far from a unique service to offer now, but can still be effective. Two places that offer this service:

BigMailBox
Everyone.net

In a similar vein, Big Nosed Bird offers a free e-card program you can use to bring in traffic.

Big Nosed Bird

Two things I should mention is that your web site has to be unique in some way for these methods to work, and you must have your own domain. Also, CGI bin access and a knowledge of how to set up CGI programs is required for the e-card program.

- Reward your steady referrers. Create a special "referrer program" folks can sign up for, and have them invite their friends to visit your site or to download your eBook, and if they do, have them mention the referee's e-mail address so they may earn a discount on your products or a free product or upgrade.
- In addition to making deals with other free eBook authors to give each others product away, look for other reciprocal deals you can make. You might have a "thank you" page for your eBook refer to an eBook on a complementary topic for someone else, and they do the same for their eBook - referring folks to yours. You'd want to try each others product first to make sure they are both products you can each endorse in good conscience.
- As mentioned earlier, create an opt-in email list. It could be for product updates only, or a regular ezine if you can stick to a schedule and consistently come up with original, quality content. Be sure to let them know that their privacy is respected and their information will not be sold, traded, or given to 3rd parties.

There are two approaches you can take when you notify people of new products. You can give them a teaser description - something to get them interested, but don't give away too much so that their curiosity is piqued, then have them visit a web page for the details where you can let your full ad copy do the work for you. If your sales copy does a good job, they're right where they need to be to make a purchase. If they do make a purchase, have the thank you page have a recommend it link for sending the product info to a friend.

An alternative to that is to have them send for an autoresponder message for more details, and ask them to forward the message to their friends that might be interested.

Of course, the other way is to tell them all the best benefits right up front. No matter which method you use, ask them to tell all their friends that might be interested.

- If you have an ezine or start one, you can trade ads with other ezine publishers, or you can buy ezine ads if not. Test market in smaller ezines before spending big money on ads in large circulation ezines. You want to develop a good selling ad copy at low cost so you don't stick a dog of an ad in a popular ezine at a much higher cost.
- Allow other people to reprint special excerpts from your eBook as topical articles on their web site, with proper credit attribution and links, of course. If the excerpt has value to the person reading it, they will be tempted to look into the full product.
- Send excerpts from your eBook to ezine publishers for them to reprint in their ezines as relevant topic articles, again, with the proper credits and links.
- List it with freeware and shareware sites. Some of them are beginning to include eBooks now. Allow most sites to give it away as a freebie or reward. Note that inside your eBook in case they miss it on your web site. You don't want to let just anyone give it away though, you'll see why in just a bit.
- Since it is a free eBook, it's okay to put advertisements in it, just don't overdo it. You could sell ad space, or give ad space away in exchange for others promoting it for you. I'd advise against putting advertisements in a commercial eBook though.

If you overdo the advertising, it will be viewed as a tool to sell ads more than a tool to help the consumer. Furthermore, once a person downloads too many bad eBooks, how long will it take before they quit downloading eBooks? In the long run, it will ruin it for everyone.

- Donate copies of your eBook as prizes for contests. It doesn't cost you anything really, and can generate great publicity.
- Include a promo blurb for your eBook in your email signature file.
- Start your own Internet radio talk show on your topic. Individuals can do this for free at:

Live 365

The pages load slow at this site, but once you are streaming audio it's generally a good solid stream with few, if any, breaks in the sound.

- Join discussion lists at Yahoo Groups or Topica and other sites on relevant topics. When you post a message include your signature file. Many of these groups have thousands of subscribers.

Don't talk about or promote your product directly in your posts unless someone specifically asks for more information or you may get a lot of angry emails. Most find a small signature file acceptable though.

You can also start a free email list of your own at these services. I recommend Topica over Yahoo Groups for that. In my opinion, they have better security and it's easier to use.

- Send out press releases, both locally and via the Internet to mass markets. You'll find a free Press Release Service at:

PRWeb

If your product is new and innovative enough, you might get a valuable write up in large circulation publications.

- Don't forget offline marketing. Post notices on the bulletin boards freely available at many businesses, pass out flyers at flea markets, ask stores selling merchandise related to your topic to slip a flyer into the customer's bag when they make a purchase, or you might try running a classified ad, creating a business card just for your eBook and give them out wherever you can, etc.

Some merchants may not be interested in stuffing your flyer in their bag. Incentivize them! Instead of flyers, print up VIP certificates giving their customers a special discount. Use the business name on your VIP discount certificate for gaining trust by association!

It gives the business owner something of value to offer their customers as a bonus for shopping with them, and sends people to your web site. Do make sure the VIP certificates are not cheap looking though, or it can seem like being offered a discount to be ripped off. Everything should be 1st quality.

The Downside to Viral Marketing

One downside to viral marketing is the same as the upside! You're having others do the marketing for you. How is that bad? You have less control over the marketing of your product.

Another downside is that you might need to police who you let give your product away or sign up for your affiliate program. You wouldn't really want "The Adolf Hitler Fan Club" promoting you, would you?

Yet another downside is that it takes time. Don't expect overnight success. Like a real virus, it doesn't reach epidemic proportions until it reaches critical mass. It will mostly be marginally beneficial until it reaches a certain level of visibility. It may be scarcely noticeable for the first few months, or even year or two, but when it hits a certain point, it becomes epidemic.

27.   Final Quality Check

Remember, you only want to produce high quality products or you may damage your name or company name at the onset and will not achieve optimum results. I've stressed that a lot, but sure as I'm sitting here typing there will be some that are overeager and rush a product to market and it's going to lack quality. Then they'll probably blame something or someone other than themselves for their lack of success. When you think you're the exception to all the rules, you're probably wrong.

Before proceeding with the actual steps of making your product into an eBook, use a spell checker on your document to find spelling errors and typos. This is vitally important. No one types without making mistakes and everyone misspells a word now and then. If you think that doesn't apply to you, someone will be happy to point it out to you, and they often do. This eBook is over 46,000 words long, and my spell checker found 77 spelling errors and typos in it. That's not many for that many words I suppose, but if I hadn't used a spell checker, people would notice all the typos and think this was riddled with errors and very unprofessional.

Once you've spell checked your document, proofread the whole thing...more than once. Why? Proofreading will help you find mistakes a spell checker doesn't look for.

If eye ran a smell checker on this pair a graph, it wood not low Kate any airs. Butt, as ewe can sea, it has allot of miss takes.

Okay, so that's an exaggerated example, but it gets the point across. You'll most likely find mistakes the first few times through, and may well find places you want to tweak. With this eBook, I found over over two dozen errors my spell checker didn't find. Places where I left a little word out, places where I used *your* instead of *you're*, and things like that.

Look for things like using the word "their" when you mean "they're" or "there" - a spell checker won't catch these types of errors either. They are common "flow of thought" typing errors that will detract from the overall professionalism of your product.

If grammar isn't your strong suit, I've even included some basic grammar tips in the bonus section that may help you.

The next thing to do is test all your links to make sure they all work. If you don't have links, you obviously won't have to test them, but providing quality resources with your product is a nice content addition. I usually include a small disclaimer about the links, which I'd advise you to do too. In fact, feel free to copy my disclaimer statement if you like - no need to credit me for it. I hereby declare my link disclaimer to be public domain, but that's all. :o) You'll find it at the beginning of the Resources section.

Once you've spell checked your eBook, have proofread it until you feel it's in great shape, and have tested all of your links, if you're satisfied it's ready to go then you can proceed with the last step before compiling it into an eBook. If you're not quite satisfied, but can't put your finger on any particular reason for it, you might consider two further development options.

You could ask your friends and trusted associates to read it and ask for constructive criticism and their honest thoughts about it. Make sure they know you're not seeking praise, but are looking for mistakes and improvements. Tell them your objective is to make it as good as you can, not to swell your head. Let creating a quality product swell your bank account instead, that will fix up your head pretty good!

The other option is to have it professionally critiqued by an authority on the topic, and/or professionally edited. This can be done via the Internet and email at a reasonable cost.

There are one or two other things you'll want to create or have created for you before you compile your eBook. Your eBook will sell better with a high quality graphic depicting a book with your title and name or company name on it.

If you don't know how to create graphics, I'd advise hiring someone to create the cover graphic for you. You may even be able to trade a copy of your eBook for a cover graphic, or trade a credit to the artist and link to his web site inside your eBook for a cover graphic.

eBook Cover Central specializes in creating eBook cover graphics and they do nice work, very nice.

eBook Cover Central

You'll use this graphic on your web site sales page. It gives the product a "real" feel, rather than just talking about it. It's easier to sell a product your potential customer can see than one where you just talk about the product. This is why most software companies feature screen shots of their software products. It makes it seem real.

I also recommend using an opening graphic inside your eBook. This can be the cover shot you use on your web page, or you could make a new graphic. Without the opening graphic in your eBook it probably opens in mostly black and white text, which isn't visually exciting. A splash of color upon opening the eBook is visually stimulating and makes a better first impression, which helps create a sense of excitement and anticipation.

To further create excitement and anticipation, you may consider using sound upon the opening of your eBook. If you had your speakers on when you first opened this eBook, you should have heard a thunderclap. It was my intent to have the power of this eBook reflected in the sound of thunder upon opening it. Was it cool? I think so. My wife picked the sound to use from a library of sounds I have. I think it was an excellent choice. Thunder means rain, rain helps things grow, and you're learning to grow money! See how I've tried to tie in the theme of growing money throughout this product? It gives the impression of a more

complete and well thought out product. That's something that doesn't happen by just throwing it together, and it enhances the perceived quality.

Once you have your cover graphic and splash graphic, you're all set to get ready to compile your eBook.

28. eBook Compilers (and How to Use the One I Use)

To create the actual eBook you'll need an eBook compiler or an online compiling service. Compilers range from free to very expensive. There are many products and services to choose from, and of course, you often get more features with the commercial products than with the free ones. You'll have to decide which is right for you. If my choice is worth anything to you, I use a commercial product called eBook Generator.

Most eBook compilers take a series of HTML (web) pages and compile them into an executable file (yourbook.exe). Double-clicking on the executable file opens the eBook. Some are self-contained with their own viewer, some require all users to install a special viewer, some use the Internet Explorer engine, and a few default to any compatible browser.

Obviously I can't tell you how to use every product out there, but I'll give you a brief description of many compilers and services, and the links to the various vendor sites so you can compare and choose which product or service you feel most comfortable with. Most of them are pretty straight forward and fairly easy to use. Before I give you the list of compilers, I will show you how easy it is to compile an executable eBook using eBook Generator.

eBook Generator

This is the product I used to create this eBook. It took less than 5 minutes to turn my web pages into an eBook.

eBook Generator Web Site
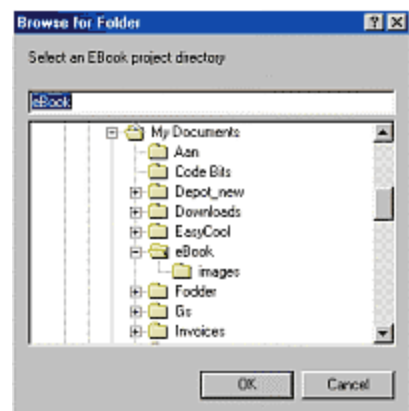
Here are screen shots of the compiling process using eBook Generator's 10-step wizard.

Step   1

This is where you tell the program what folder to include and it instantly adds all the content of the folder, including sub-folders like an images folder and its
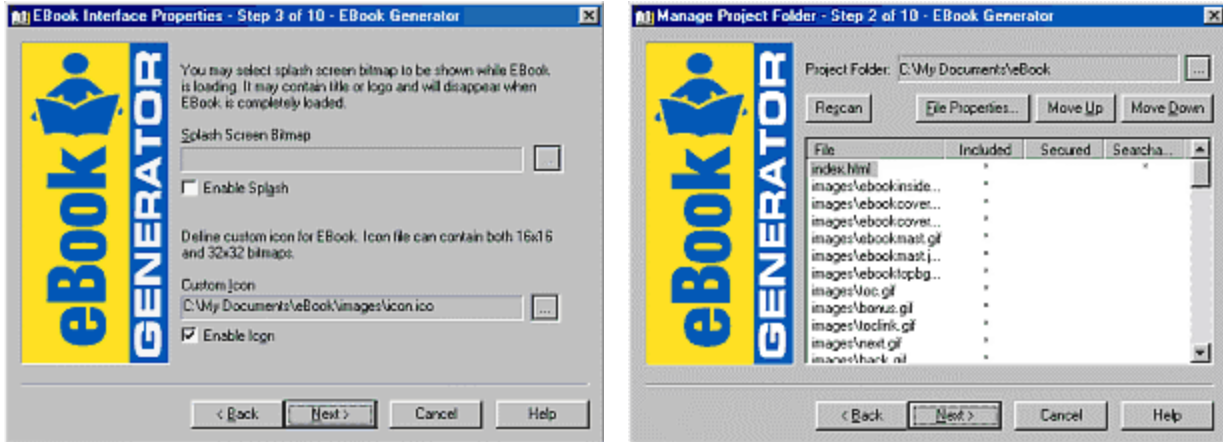
content. Obviously then, you should create your eBook in its own folder and set it up like a web site. This screen is one that actually pops up when you choose to start a new project. You can also open an existing project.

Step   2

This step shows you all the files in the folder you chose and lets you change the
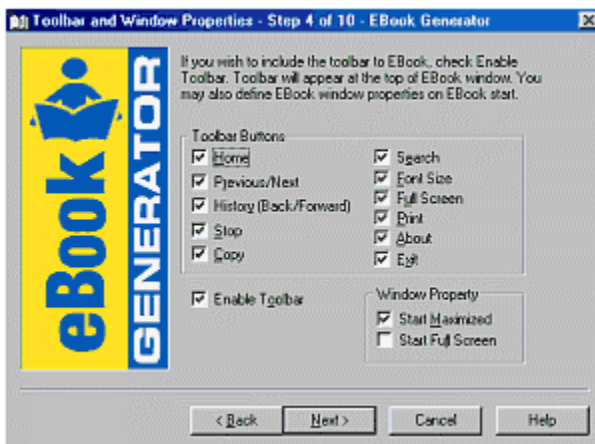
order of your pages. It automatically places the index.html at the top. If you name your pages 1.html, 2.html, 3.html and so forth as you make them, they will already be in the proper order with no need to rearrange them. You also set which pages to password protect here if you want to protect individual pages. Later in the process you can protect the whole eBook at once instead of selecting individual pages.

Step   3

In this step you choose a splash screen and icon if you made one for your eBook and want to use them.

Step 4

Here is where you choose whether you want a tool bar on top, and if so, which tools should be included. Options include a Home button, Previous and Next buttons, History buttons, Stop button, Copy button, Search button, Font Size button, Full Screen button, Print button, About button, and Exit button. The
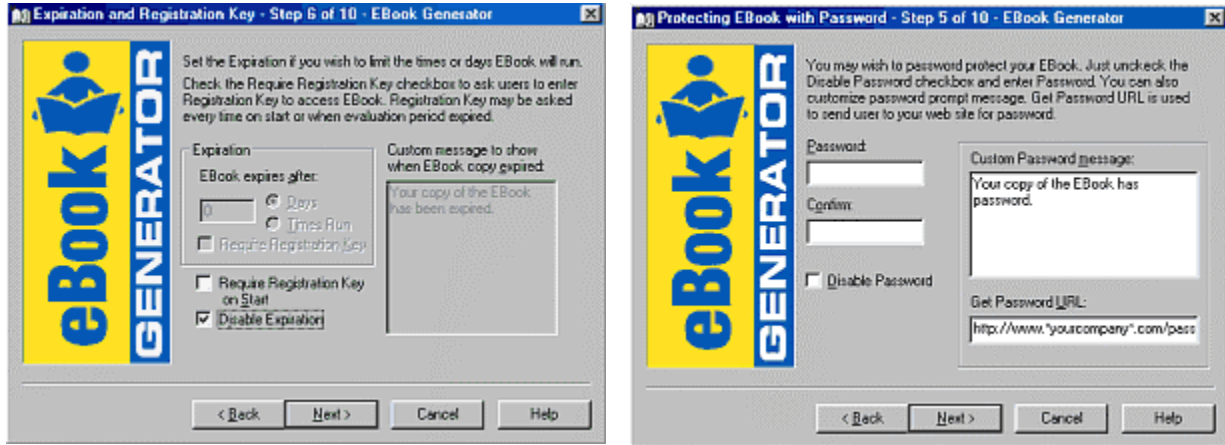
Forward and Back history buttons are
similar to the Next and Previous buttons, but that's not as redundant as it first seems. Next and Back go in chronological order, whereas with the history buttons you can jump back and forth between pages that are not located next to each other. You could also disable all four buttons if you want your users to only navigate using a links menu you create in the HTML.

Step   5

If you password protected any pages in step 2, here is where you enter the password. You can also disable password protection here. You can set your own

password message and an URL to retrieve the password from.

Step   6

In this step you can make your eBook time out like shareware. You can set it to expire after a certain number of days or after a certain number of uses. You can set your own message to be displayed to the user once the product has expired.
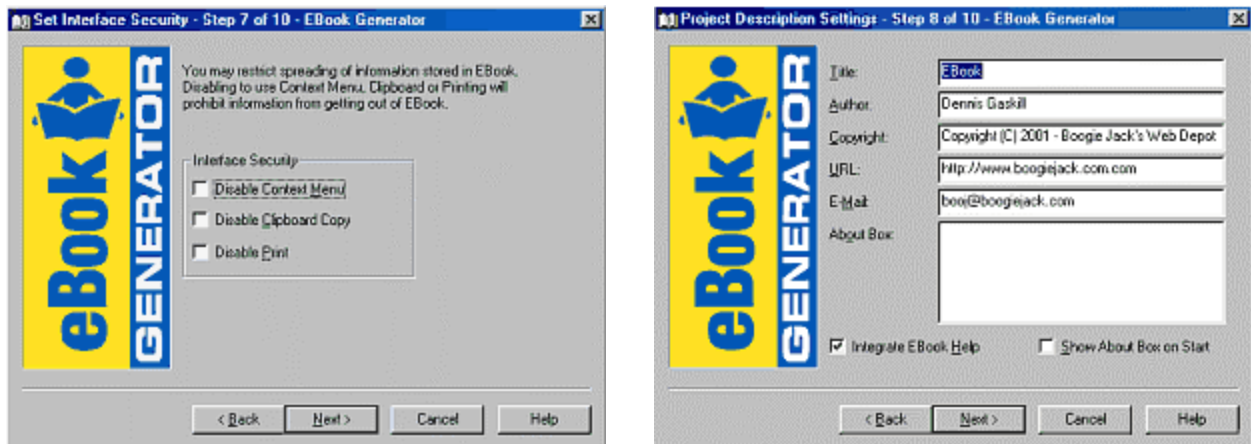
Hey, that makes you like a big time operator!

You can also require a user to have a registration key that you provide before accessing the material. A registration key generator comes with the program. The registration system is solid. It requires a different registration key for each user. No one can give their key to a pal because it won't work. They'll have to buy your product to get their own key. This means you'll have to check your email daily and give out keys as needed. If you don't like that idea, password protect your pages so one password will work for all copies. People can give out the password that way though.

Step   7

This step is where you choose whether or not to allow the right click context menu to pop-up, to allow clipboard copying, and to allow printing. Pretty easy stuff, huh!

Step   8

Step 8 is where you enter the eBook title, copyright notice, author name, web site and email addresses, and the text you want to show up in the About box under Help on the menu.

Step   9

In step 9 you simply choose your compression setting. Your options are No Compression, Normal Compression, Best Speed, or Best Compression. Best speed means your eBook will open faster for a user, but take longer to download. Best Compression means it will be a faster download, but not open quite as quickly. Normal is the average of the two and is probably the best choice.
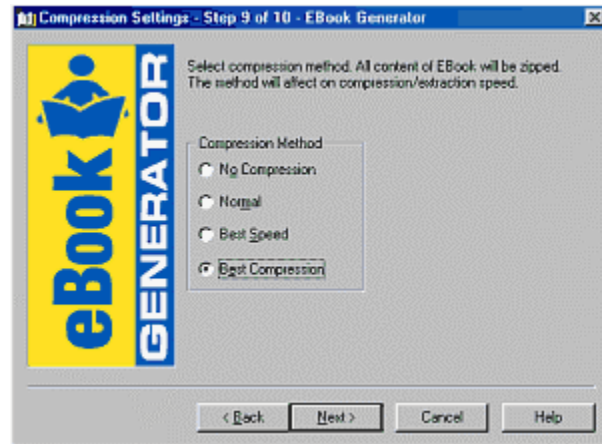
Step   10
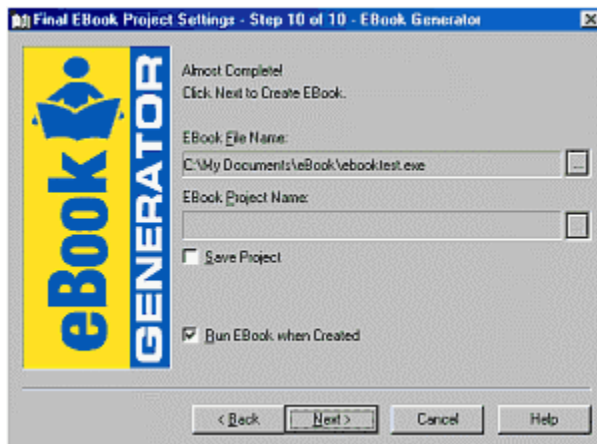
In step 10, the last step, you simply choose where to save it and what to call it and you're done. It's all pretty easy the way this program is set up.

eBook Generator Web Site

Other eBook Compilers

The following eBook compilers use the HTML to eBook method. At the end of the list will be other types of compilers and services.

Note: the program features I list isn't a comprehensive list of the features of each product. Most of the programs have many more features than listed, and most, but not all, tend to have the same features. Some do have unique features and prices do vary greatly, so shop around for the price and features that best suit you.

These are listed in alphabetical order. Freeware programs are denoted above the web site link.

- **Activ E-Book Compiler**

Password protected pages, icon customization, includes 700 icons or create your own, save and resume your work, file compression, expiry and free trial features, unique serial numbers in every eBook, built-in search engine in your eBook, splash screens, and more.

Activ E-Book Compiler

- **EbookBuilder**

EbookBuilder will compile HTML and Text documents, and images in BMP, GIF, and JPG format in a completely self standing eBook executable that has all the files included in the executable in a compressed form. The Ebook can be read like a book with a left and a right page or single-page view, auto launch browser or email program, and more. Also has sBookBuilder on same page (see below).

Freeware
EbookBuilder

- **eBook Edit Pro**

Includes a wizard for easy step-by-step creation of eBooks. Uses encryption to keep people from retrieving your source code from the Internet Temp folder.

Allows for individual user names and passwords or a single password for all users. Can secure entire eBook or selected pages, can be time limited demo allowing a time trial for a set number of days, and more.

eBook Edit Pro

- **eBook Generator**

This is the product I used to create this eBook. It includes a wizard for easy step-by-step creation of eBooks, a unique Virus Prevention feature where your eBook keeps track of its content and alerts the user if it was modified. Also has splash screens capability and you can use a custom icon, has menu control, search feature, compression control, password protection for some or all pages, save as project for easy updating later, and more.

Last minute update! eBook Generator has a new edition out that does even more than pictured in the above tutorial. It even includes a rebranding feature. That's where you can allow others to rebrand the parts of your eBook that you allow with their own logo/info. That means you'll find a lot more people willing to give it away if you're creating an eBook to give away to draw traffic to your web site. I know I'll be using it!

As if the wizard wasn't easy enough, there are now also audio tutorials telling you exactly what to do. The training audios (using Real player technology) even includes tracking so you will know where your traffic is coming from. Obviously the owner of eBook Generator isn't satisfied with just being one of the best, he wants his product to be the best! I love that attitude. There are more new features too, but I'll let you learn about them at their web site.

eBook Generator

- **E-Book HTML Compiler Pro and Pro Plus**

Drop and Drag files to be compiled, compile all files in a selected directory or recursive directories, links to the WWW by way of the default browser, select the

default screen size for the eBook, limit or remove all buttons from the eBook, allow or disallow printing, and more.

E-Book HTML Compiler Pro and Pro Plus

- **EbookPaper**

Password protect certain pages, set expiry date, disable right-click, no temp file extraction, compile e-books with sub-directories, project saving, splash screen, rebranding, customize the About box of the e-book, and more.

EbookPaper

- **Editor**

Password protect part or all of your eBook, burglar proof - no sharing of eBook with others, allows you to "skin" your eBook, custom sized windows, Direct-X to control screen resolution, eBook opens at the last page the reader was on when closed, project saving and more.

E-ditor

- **eLectronic Book Shell**

Notebook-like interface, easy-to-use, fast and small, flexible filters print reports, unlimited number of entries and eBooks.

Freeware
eLectronic Book Shell

- **HTML2EXE**

Search engine, link checking and error reporting, password protection, use your own logo on the button bar and your own icons in the EXE file, prevent printing, prevent copying to clipboard, direct access to your HTML editor, and more.

HTML2EXE

- **KeeBook Creator**

Graphic interface, organize eBook into chapters and sub-chapters using the mouse, search feature, compatible with all standard browsers, KeeBooks made with KeeBook Creator may be plugged into an advertising server, and more.

Freeware
KeeBook Creator

- **Mediapacker eBook Compiler**

Save projects, extended author information in the About window, Direct X to control screen resolution, use your own icon, disable right mouse menu and copy and paste, require a password to close the eBook (is that a good thing???), splash screen, start message, and more.

Mediapacker eBook Compiler

- **sBook Builder**

Creates a stand alone HTML viewer executable of a directory and all the HTML, images and sound files in it with just a few button clicks. Frames support, zoomable print preview, custom start page, optional password protection, and more. Also has eBook Builder on the same page.

Freeware
sBook Builder

- **Web Compiler**

The source code can be made inaccessible to the end user, pages or complete directories can be protected by password/userid combinations, passwords can also be related to specific systems, an expiry date can be set, built-in multithreaded searching allows the user to search the entire presentation, built-in

form processing provides multiple ways for the user to return data to the author, even though there is no "server" involved, and more.

Web Compiler

Other Compilers

- **Bookmaker eBook compiler**

Requires the FREE yBook reader to be able to read it. Main features is that it can turn plain text files in an eBook and there is no scrolling. Information is presented in an "open book" fashion. Click a button to turn the page.

Bookmaker eBook compiler

- **tk3 Author**

Optional built in templates for a professional look, drag and drop from one window to another, use any font, include audio and video, works on Mac or PC operating system and more. Requires the free tk3 Reader to view, requires Apple Quicktime to be installed for video.

tk3 Author

- **Microsoft Reader**

Convert Word documents into Microsoft Reader format with the Read-in Reader add in. Requires Reader to be installed to create and read the reader format. Both are free.

Reader Homepage Microsoft Reader

Read-in add in: Read-in add in

- **WinEbook**

WinEbook uses varied fonts, sizes, and colors of text, pictures, sounds, music, hyperlinks to email, the web, high level of encryption, password protection, and much more. Free viewer required to view your eBook.

WinEbook

- **Adobe Acrobat**

Convert any file type to PDF format, zoomable pages, search feature, add images, and more. Requires the free Acrobat reader. Adobe Acrobat has been around for a long time, but many first time users find the format awkward and confusing to use. It's also expensive. There is a big advantage to PDF files though. It's readable on all platforms including the Mac computer and Web TV.

Adobe Acrobat

Here are three lower cost alternatives to creating PDF files:

- **Gymnast**

Converts text files to PDF format without the need for any additional Adobe software. It is relatively easy to use and recently became freeware.

Freeware
Gymnast

- **Free-PDF**

Free PDF is a utility which allows you to create PDF files. Not recommended for novice PC users because it requires installing and configuring 3 separate programs, Aladdin Ghostscript, RedMon and Free PDF itself.

Free-PDF

- **5D PDF Creator**

Create PDF files with ease with this free utility. There is an indication this won't always be freeware. It is similar in many ways to Free PDF but is easier to install and use.

5D PDF Creator

Online Services

- **Ebookomatic**

Membership based site to convert your Word documents to an eBook online, you set the price and they sell them for you. In addition to the membership fee, they currently keep 25% of sales. An option if you can't accept credit cards.

Ebookomatic

- **Ebook Pro Compiler**

Unique approach, eBooks are not downloadable, but only viewable online. This allows you to deactivate any account for paying with a bad check, if someone asks for a refund, or other reasons. It offers more security from theft as you can deactivate anyone's eBook at any time, but what are you going to do if the company goes out of business? Your products only work through their servers. The features and benefits are nice, but I'd be careful about this one.

Ebook Pro Compiler

- **goBCL**

Don't want to make web pages for your eBook? goBCL provides you with free document conversion into PDF and HTML. Convert PDF (Portable Document Format), RTF (Rich Text Format), TXT (Simple Text Format), DOC (Microsoft Word Format), XLS (Microsoft Excel Format) and PPT (Microsoft PowerPoint Format) into HTML.

Free service
goBCL

- **HTMLDOC**

Convert HTML files to PDF or PostScript, generate a table of contents for books, generate indexed HTML files. Free program, but if you require support beyond the help manual, it will cost plenty.

Freeware
HTMLDOC

Microsoft Word Tip!

You can open any text file with Microsoft Word and save it as an HTML page. If you have a big eBook and don't want to make a large amount of HTML files, this might be a solution for you to prepare your files for converting to an eBook using the HTML to eBook style compilers. You can even add pictures to your text file in Word. It's recommended to break up long text files so your eBook isn't just one really long page. I will caution you that Word adds a lot of formatting to the HTML pages it creates, and I mean a lot. That means if you go that route your file will be larger and take longer to download, use more bandwidth, and take more hard drive space. Other than that, it does a fair job of it.

29.   How to Price Your eBook

One of the hardest things for many people to do is to price their own creative works. Quality intellectual property is a commodity that traditionally has not been subject to the price fluctuations of durable goods. Price wars are less common for intellectual property, in fact, most tend to price like the flock rather than determining their optimum selling price. It's easier that way.

There are many things to be considered. If you under price your product people may perceive it as not as good as a competitor's product with a higher price, even if yours is better. On the other hand, you can price yourself right out of the market by aiming too high. The temptation for many is to offer their intellectual property at a bargain price and hope to make more sales, but that can backfire because of perceived value.

Let me give you an example of perceived value. When I first came out with my Cyber Paradise graphics CD I sold it for $14.95. I made some sales, but when a few customers suggested I should charge more I decided to give that a try, after all, I could reduce the price later if they were wrong.

I raised the price to $19.95 and sales increased! I raised the price again to $24.95 and sales increased again! I was not only making more money per sale, but I was selling more too. It was a valuable lesson for me in perceived value.

But how did the customers feel about the product at a higher price? I received more letters telling me how great the graphics were from the people that paid $24.95 than from the ones that bought at the lower bargain price. The higher price gave it a greater perceived value in my customers minds, they were happier, and I was too.

I didn't try to raise it any higher than $24.95 though, because in good conscience, I didn't think it was worth any more than that.

The lesson is to research what other similar products are selling for, and because intellectual property is unique, price yourself toward the top of the market if you think your product is as good or better.

There is a caveat to pricing yourself toward the top of the market though. If 12 products sell for $30.00 and one is priced at $300.00, you have to ask yourself if the one priced at $300.00 is selling. Just because it's being offered at ten times the price of the other products doesn't mean it's selling.

You can also test prices. Offer it to one group for a lower price and to another group at a higher price and see which price has more sales per 100 viewers of your offer.

For example, if you offer it to 500 users at $30.00 and make two sales, you sold it to one in every 250 people who viewed your offer. If you offer it at $20.00 to 1,000 users and sold 5 copies you sold it to one in every 200 people who viewed your offer. The lower price sold more per viewers of your offer. But, did you make more money that way?

You have to take how much your profit was into account. For instance, you might make ten dollars more per sale at one price, but sell more at a lower price. You need to determine if you actually make more money from less sales for a higher profit margin, or from more sales at a lower profit margin.

In the figures given above, you sold it for $30.00 to one in every 250 people, and for $20.00 to one in every 200. With those figures, 1,000 people is an easy common denominator to work with, so at the $30.00 price you made four sales for a gross of $120.00. At the lower price of $20.00 you sold it to 5 people for a gross of $100.00. So you actually made *more* money selling less copies at the higher price.

The opposite could be true too. You could sell more at a higher price, which obviously gives you a greater profit, or you could sell enough extra products at a lower price that you make more that way. That's why you should test prices and see what the optimum price for your product is. Regardless of the price, you have

to put the same time and effort into selling it. You have to work just as hard to sell a $20 product as a $50.00 product, so you'd be wise to find your optimum price and sell it at that.

30. Developing a Web Site for Your eBook

If you already have a web site that you plan on selling your eBook from, I still encourage you to also develop a web site just for your eBook. While it's wise to capitalize on the current traffic you have to your existing web site, it is equally as wise to build a site specifically optimized for search engines just for your eBook.

In addition, if you build an affiliate program for your eBook, you can set up the new web site for affiliate sales using 3rd party monitoring and order processing, and put those sales on automatic pilot so you can continue to work on your existing site as usual.

A bonus to selling from your current site through your own shopping cart is that you can bypass the percentage your affiliate management service would take on the orders for sales generated by your existing site. To my way of thinking, that's the most effective strategy going. You'll have two places folks can find and buy your eBook instead of just one. At one site, you keep all the profits. At the other site, you share a percentage of your profits with others who make sales for you that you may not have made otherwise.

With the low cost of obtaining a domain name and the low cost of hosting, there are very few reasons not to create a site just for your eBook. You can't start a business offline without investing in it, and you shouldn't try to start a business online without investing in it. Fortunately, the cost of starting a business online is much less than in the brick and mortar world.

Placing your site on a free host does not establish trust, in fact, if anything, it adds an amount of distrust to your operation. Having your own domain gives you credibility as a legitimate business. This is credibility and trust you don't want to miss out on by being too cheap.

Who Will Process the Orders?

When it comes to creating a web site for your eBook, first you'll have to decide if you want to process the orders yourself or outsource it. Having online ordering is crucial to your success. Most people just won't bother sending a check or money order through the regular mail. And if my experiences in accepting checks is typical, you'd get a lot of rubber ones anyway. I quit accepting checks unless they are certified because of the high percentage of bad checks.

Let me illustrate how important it is to have online ordering. When I put my first product online in 1997, I only offered it by mail order. I didn't sell much at all, 2 or 3 products a month on average. Then I read how having online ordering increases sales. It captures the impulse buyer and eliminates the procrastinator who means to order but never gets around to it.

So, I went to my credit union and inquired about, and obtained, a merchant account so I could process credit card orders myself. Online processing services were simply too expensive back then to be a viable option.

When I added a shopping cart and online ordering, my sales improved dramatically. They went from 2 or 3 a month to 30 or 40 a month, with the only change being the online ordering option. That's an increase of over 1000% - now you can see that being able to accept credit card orders is a must.

Needless to say, I was thrilled. I was only working my online business part time then, and that was a nice bit of extra income. Within two more years I was able to go full time at it. It's great to work from home, I must say.

If you have good credit, you can probably get a merchant account from your bank or credit union. Shop around though, prices vary a great deal. I was able to get a merchant account for $70.00 and they take 4.5% of sales as a processing fee. Other places wanted over $500.00 and some took an even bigger percentage of sales.

If you can't get a merchant account you'll have to use an online processing service or an affiliate program to process orders for you. You simply can't do

without having the ability to accept credit cards. We'll discuss credit card processing services and setting up an affiliate program in more depth later.

Before getting a merchant account however, decide if you have the proper skills to set up a simple shopping cart. You have to know a little about CGI program installation, or be willing to hire someone to set it up for you. If you can't set up a simple shopping card or don't want to hire it done, then there is no point in getting a merchant account.

Setting up a shopping cart is not as easy as HTML coding, and some shopping carts are extremely difficult to set up. Some are fairly manageable if you have experience in web design and understand server paths. You'll find links to shopping carts in the Resources section.

You'll find a tutorial covering the basics of CGI on my site: CGI Tutorial

Repeat Customers

If you're planning for success, you are already planning on making more than one eBook. Those who buy your first product are an asset if you are smart about the sales you make.

Most newcomers would be happy to make a sale and let it end at that, but that's short-sighted. It's harder to obtain a new customer than to sell to a previous customer who is satisfied with their dealings with you. Create a database of your customers as you make sales. Then you can send an announcement of a new product or upgrade when you have one. However, there are a couple points to observe with this business strategy:

- Never abuse them by sending too many announcements, announcements about trivial things, or by selling, sharing, or trading their contact information. Respect their privacy at all times to remain on their good side.
- With every mailing, always offer them instructions on how to opt out (unsubscribe) from your product announcements. Make it easy for them and don't

debate it with them if they don't want to receive mail from you, just honor their wishes.

An alternative to simply adding them when they purchase your product is to ask for permission to contact them about new products. Give them a chance to opt in to a mailing list and you'll have a ready-made market you can promote to with your next project.

If they end up being satisfied customers, you'll get a lot of names and make a lot of sales to repeat customers. As I said earlier, it's an old truism in business that it's easier to sell to an established customer than to find a new customer.

If you want even more success in obtaining opt in subscribers, consider starting an on-topic ezine and let them opt in to that. You can pitch your new products as you deliver valuable ezine content. You'll also find some people who decide not to buy your product will opt in to a free ezine on your web site. This will give you more opportunities to sell to them later on.

You'll notice in the Special Offers section of this eBook I offer you a chance to join my main mailing list. You're an asset to me. Thank you! I love ya, man - but you can't have my Bud Light.

You can offer the chance to opt in to your mailing list on your sales page, on your thank you page, or in a follow up thank you email - or all of those places.

31. Web Site Design Basics

When it comes to building the actual sales site for your eBook, there are several things to consider. You'll want a professional business look, text that is optimized to sell the product, and the whole site should be optimized for search engines. Let's look at these areas one at a time, starting with the look.

Your objective is to look professional and have a fast loading site. If all you've ever built before are personal web sites, you'll probably need to re-adjust your thinking for your product site. For a business site, it should NOT have:

- Music (slows down pages too much, considered amateurish)
- Guestbooks (Strictly for amateurs/personal sites.)
- Inappropriate color use (Text too close to the background color so that it's hard to read, colors that don't go well together.)
- Under construction signs (Get it ready first, don't lead people down blind alleys.)
- Best viewed with [insert browser] suggestions
- Advertisements for other products (Presenting them AFTER a sale is made may be acceptable in some cases.)
- Misspellings
- Poor grammar and improper punctuation
- Sentences with all capital letters for emphasis (Considered rude, shouting at your audience, and is harder to read.)
- All centered text (Amateurish; justify or left justify text.)
- Broken links
- Broken images
- Outdated content
- Lack of customer focus (Remember, it's about what's in it for them.)
- Missing contact information (People may want to ask questions before buying, or know that they can contact someone if something goes wrong.

Some will write and ask a question to see how fast you respond before making a decision to purchase. If you don't respond fast enough for them, they don't buy.)

- Unclear/hard to find ordering instructions (I've seen sites where I could not figure out how to order - they lost my sale)
- Animated gifs (Distracts from the sales pitch, slow to download, visual clutter that detracts from your purpose.)
- Java affects and other gee whiz gizmos (Stick to business! Java is not the same as JavaScript.)
- Profanity
- Rambling, unfocused sale presentation
- Building a web site is easy. Building an a web site that is an effective sales tool takes planning and is considerably more work. Don't worry, you can do it. I believe in you.
- Now let's look at what a business site SHOULD have:
- Complementary color use
- Clear focus on the customer
- Benefit oriented sales presentation
- Easy navigation
- Believe-ability (don't over-hype or make outrageous claims)
- Quality graphics, but not too many!
- User testimonials
- A strong guarantee
- Fast loading pages
- Clean look (sufficient white space to have an uncluttered appearance)
- Your picture (okay, that's optional, but if you put your mug online people will tend to trust you sooner because they feel you're not a con artist hiding behind a web site when you're willing to show the world who you are.)

Now, when I listed all those items a business site should and shouldn't have, I'm talking about a business site with a focus on selling one product. My Boogie Jack's Web Depot site breaks many of those suggestions, but it's not a site designed for making a quick sale and churning customers through the turnstiles.

The purpose of that site is completely different from the site we're designing to sell your eBook. For an example of a site designed solely to sell one product, visit the site specifically for this eBook at http://www.ebookfarming.com.

Before building even one page, identify your customer. Who are they? What are their interests? How old are they? Picture what kind of people they are, how they might dress, and how they wear their hair. Write this information down and keep it in mind as you build your site. You are building a site for THEM, not for you.

"But what good does all that do," you ask?

I'm glad you asked that! If you're selling an eBook about gardening you'll want some nice earth tones for accent on your site, perhaps a muted flower or flowers for part of your logo or header, you'll want to write in a non-technical, down to earth way. Slapping up a site for gardeners with a black background and neon colors just doesn't suit the intended audience.

If your eBook was about ski-diving from a plane with skis on and landing on a mountain side and skiing to the bottom without stopping, you'll want to build some excitement into your design.

Most business sites use a white background color, and you shouldn't stray from this unless you know what you're doing. A white background color is a known and trusted commodity. It implies trust, honesty, and clean business.

Black text on a white background color also offers the most contrast, making it the easiest to read color combination going. Stray from the tried and true at your own risk. If you want to have more color, try a slim left border background that has a white background color for the main content area.

Now that you know your site's intended audience, you can plan the various sections you will need. A site with a purpose of selling one product doesn't need a lot, and you don't want a lot or your potential customers may get lost in it or tire of the presentation.

Your index page is your main sales page. Here you will present your company logo or product name, a cover image of your eBook, and your main sales presentation. The sales presentation should lead them into the product, and more specifically, the benefits of owning the product, then transition them step-by-step into a call to action (the decision to buy).

You don't want to ask for money too soon, or too late. If you ask for the sale too soon your prospect may not have enough information about your product to make an informed decision, which may mean you lose a sale.

On the other hand, if you drone on and on they'll will probably get bored and feel you're pushing too hard. It's easy to dislike someone who is pushing too hard, and easy to move on to another web site if they sense that. Clearly, it's a balancing act that must be perfected through trial and error until your site is optimized for sales.

If you've successfully introduced the product and are transitioning a respectable percentage of visitors into buying (2% or more), that's all you need. But let's aim at selling to some of the undecided crowd. That's those that are still interested, but need to know more to make the buying decision.

Undecided people are the same as lost customers, because if they can't make up their mind to buy, they won't. To further convince them, you might want to include a FAQ page. FAQ is an acronym for Frequently Asked Questions. Here you can present possible objections in the form of questions and provide the answers that overcome those objections.

On your sales page you'll also want a few testimonials. As you gather a lot of testimonials, you might add a testimonials page so that those who base their decisions largely on the comments of others who have already purchased your eBook will have more reasons to believe they need or want your product. If you do put up a testimonial page, don't remove all your testimonials from your main sales page. Some folks won't click through to a testimonial page, preferring to make up their own mind. That doesn't mean they won't see your testimonials on

your main page and be influenced by them no matter how much they see themselves as an independent thinking individual.

One thing you should always have on your site is your contact information. This can be on a separate page or simply an email link on your main page. Someone may have a question about your product and your answer may result in a sale. If there is no contact information that sale is lost. People also want to know there is someone at the other end that will be responsible for the product if there are problems.

When it comes to writing your actual sales presentation, remember to emphasize the sizzle. We covered this earlier, so this is just a reminder. The sizzle is the benefits of owning your product. The features are the number of pages and other factual things about the eBook itself. Include just enough features to make the product seem real, and sell the benefits.

In selling the benefits, stress your products best benefits first. A man selling a blind dog praises her sweet disposition.

In closing, let me say that if you can't design a professional looking site, either hire it done or use templates. Professionalism is vital. You'll find free web site templates (some require you to host your site with them) at:

Basic Templates (Recommended)

Free Site Templates

Free Web Templates

Website Control Free Templates

Do-It-Yourself Webservices

The next section will give you the basics of HTML, which is the actual coding of web pages. If you're familiar with the basics of HTML, you still might want to read the next section because it primarily covers several search engine

optimization techniques. I included the basics of HTML so those unfamiliar with it could follow along better.

You probably won't need to hire a designer or use templates for your actual eBook. It doesn't have to be fancy inside, it just has to serve the purpose and look professional.

32.   Web Site Search Engine Optimization

Fortunately, writing your sales presentation will most likely result in very good search engine optimization for the visible portion of your page because it will be keyword rich by describing your product. The visible text on your page, if you're a perfectionist, should have a three to ten percent ratio of keywords to other words.

Every search engine has its own algorithm (formula) for ranking a web site's relevance. No one page is going to score high on all search engines. Your ranking will also fluctuate at each search engine because they often change their rating criteria to foil database manipulation. The techniques I lay out below will help you optimize your site as best as can be for the long term. It's been working for me since 1997.

Keyword-rich copy is one thing the search engines like, but not as much as they used to. You should still strive for the 3-10% ratio of keywords while maintaining text that makes sense to your visitors. Below are links to online keyword density analyzers you can use for free.

Keyword Density Analyzer

Keyword Frequency Analyzer

Bruce Clay Keyword Density Analyzer

Keyword Density

There are search engine optimization specialists whose job is to "crack" search engine algorithms. They spend hours going over search engines results and

statistics trying to figure out each search engine's current formula for high rankings.

Once they have "cracked" the algorithms they create different gateway pages for each search engine. Using this method, as soon a new algorithm is in place, these carefully crafted gateway pages will often drop out of sight in the rankings. The new algorithm must be cracked again, and new gateway pages must be created. It's a never-ending, time-consuming, expensive, wasteful process for the average webmaster.

Even though search engines do have different algorithms and do change them regularly, the truth is, they basically all want to see the same things in a Web site:

- A simple, clean design with a focus on content
- Easy navigation
- Well-written, keyword-rich, benefit orientated copy
- Title tags, meta tags, and image alt tags that are relevant

Pretty common-sense stuff. Web sites with these features usually don't need to worry about search engine manipulation. These sites have the potential to achieve high ranking for many key words in any and all major search engines for years, regardless of the ever-changing algorithms. I've found that to be the case for me. Full disclosure though, search engines currently place a high premium on link popularity, which is how many sites there are that link to you. There are a lot of links to my site out there on the net. That wasn't always the case though, and I still enjoyed high rankings.

Now let's look at the bare necessities of a web page and address each search engine legal page optimization opportunity. The bare necessities of a web page are:

<html>
<head>
<title> Your Title Here </title>

</head>
<body>

Your content goes here.

</body>
</html>

Those are the basic HTML tags every web page needs. That's not too hard is it? Now let's examine each part and optimize.

<html>

This is the opening tag for a web page. There is no optimization. It simply tells a browser what kind of document it is.

<head>

This opens the head section of a web page. The head section is mostly hidden from your visitor, though some parts will show up in places. The head section is where you place certain information about your web page that is mostly used by search engines. There is no actual optimization to the head section, but there is for the contents of the head section. As you can see, the first head section content is the:

<title>

The title is the name of your web site or web page. It should have 60 or fewer characters to be in harmony with all search engines, and should be keyword stuffed. For example, if your eBook teaches how to play the guitar, a good keyword rich title for your web site index page would be:

<title> Guitar course: fingerpicking, chords, lead and rhythm guitar <title>

With that, we have several good keyword search terms and remained under 60 characters. It doesn't have to read like a sentence, but the title will show up in the title bar of the browser so it should make sense.

Beyond the basics, there are two meta tags that should be added to the head section of your web page. The keyword meta tag is where you add keywords that are relevant to your web page. The description meta tag is where you add a description of your web page. The keywords are not visible to anyone, the description is not visible to your viewers, but will show up on some search engines as the description of your site in the search results. I'll show you how to write these meta tags here, but there is also a meta tag utility in the Bonus Section of this eBook.

The description meta tag:

<meta name="description" content="Self-paced guitar instruction course teaches you rhythm guitar, chord progressions, finger style picking, lead guitar, how to read music, and all you need to know to be a real guitar player.">

The keywords meta tag:

<meta name="keywords" content="self-paced guitar instruction course, learn how to play the guitar, chord progressions, lead and rhythm guitar">

The description meta tag should read like sentences, while using as many keywords as you can without looking like an idiot. It should be no more than two or three sentences. If you make it too long it will be cut off.

The keywords meta tag should be all keywords, it shouldn't read like a sentence. Be careful not to repeat any word more than three times or your site may be penalized for "keyword stuffing" at most search engines. Try to work your keywords into phrases that someone might use to search for a product like yours. Any single keyword within a phrase will be used as one matching item by any search engine, but an entire phrase match will rank you higher than a single keyword match when the searcher uses a phrase instead of a single search word.

That's all you need in the head section, so then you close the head section, add the body tag, and write your content.

Within your content are more opportunities to add search engine legal keywords. For any images you add, use an image alt tag. Here's an example:

<img src="guitar.jpg" width="280" height="120" alt="self-paced guitar instruction course">

Notice the:

alt="self-paced guitar instruction course"

...part of the image tag. Therein lies the opportunity to add more keywords to your page. You should always use an image's width and height tags too. They help your page load faster and smoother.

Notice too, that the image name I used was "guitar.jpg". Naming your images with a keyword is another legal way to add keywords to your web page.

A link represents three more legal opportunities to add keywords to your page. Here is an example:

Guitar Guide FAQ

Can you spot all three optimizations?

- The name of the web page the link goes to is named "guitar_faq.html" and is the first keyword opportunity. By naming your actual HTML file with a keyword, you gain a valuable optimization. If you use more than one word when naming your page, separate the words with an underscore, as I have shown in the guitar_faq.html example.
- The seldom used, but perfectly legal, title tag can be added to a link. It should read like a keyword rich sentence.

- The final technique is to use keywords in your actual link text, which in this example was "Guitar Guide FAQ".

Armed with these optimization techniques you'll have designed your site as best as you can as far as the actual hidden tricks go. There are more important ranking criteria though. With a one trick pony like your web site to sell your eBook will be, it can be difficult to make the current most important things work for you.

The two most important ranking criteria is incoming links and themed sites. If you have a lot of quality links to your site you'll be ranked higher, and if the sites you link to and that link to you follow specific themes you rank higher. Since your site is going to be designed to sell a single product, it will be hard to obtain quality themed reciprocal links - if you even wanted to link to other sites. It's probably best not to for sales purposes.

So, that may be one area you just have to take your lumps in. One thing that will help is that much of your competition won't know all the other optimization techniques, and there is probably a smaller pool of competition to begin with since you have an actual product to sell.

If you want further instructions on building a web site I have many tutorials online:

HTML Tutorials

You'll also find CSS tutorials:

CSS Tutorials

Also, my book, Web Site Design Made Easy is the perfect book for beginners and experienced webmasters alike. You'll find a detailed description of it here:

Web Site Design Made Easy

And finally, if you want to learn more about search engine optimization, check out my Search Engine Optimization Strategies (SEOS) course:

SEOS

Now that your site is optimized, go back over your copy and refine it. Again and again and again. Highly focused copy will help you rank better with search engines and help sell product better. Use short sentences, short paragraphs, and make it as crisp as you can. Important points are often lost in long sentences and long paragraphs.

Write in the language and style that will appeal to your target audience. Work your keywords into the text and identify possible headlines. Break up your copy by adding keyworded headlines into it. Headlines serve to pull a reader into the text, and the larger font size used for headlines will cause search engines to place more importance on the keywords in them.

Long pages are harder to get a good ranking with in search engines. The body copy gets too diluted for good keyword weighting because the copy usually isn't tightly focused enough. If it takes a long copy to sell your product, use an unanswered question or incomplete sentence as a teaser to entice your visitor to click to the next page. Ideal page length is 1-2 screens. Besides the optimization issues, if users see pages with too many screens of text they may just move on before investigating much of anything. Short pages seem easy and inviting...and your visitors won't know how many pages there are so there isn't the tendency to give up on your sales copy as easily. Just use the unfinished sentence or unanwered question to lure them to the next page.

I know when I run into a sales presentation that is too long, I often just don't bother myself with it. I don't have time to sit and "be sold" for a half hour or more. To my way of thinking, if it takes that many words to sell your product, either the product concept or implementation must not have that much value if they feel such a great need to wear down your resistance through a lengthy sales pitch. I've probably missed a couple of good things in skipping over long presentations, but I've saved a lot of time too, and my time is valuable.

Bear in mind though, that too many short pages can also be annoying to visitors. With a slow connection, they can spend a lot of time waiting for pages to load. Try to strike a reasonable balance.

If you want to know more about search engine optimization, some search engines will tell you at least part of what they look for. Question 6 from Alta Vista's FAQ reads:

6. What is the best way to increase my site's ranking in the AltaVista index?

Alta Vista's answer:

There's no magic shortcut or trick since AltaVista uses many complex algorithms for ranking sites in response to specific search terms. Spend your energy and money making your pages as useful as possible to your target audience. **The quality of your site is an important ranking factor!**

Part of improving the quality of your site is thinking about what your audience wants, and the terms your audience might use to search. Write your text so your pages are better matches for specific queries.

- Use specific words (such as "recycled computers," or "laptop computers") in your text so your site will match these specific queries. Use the query terms you consider most important in your page title, in the description, and in the first paragraph of your page. Don't waste the highly important first paragraph on fluff or a seasonal message. The first paragraph should make clear the main purpose of the page and the nature of its content.
- Be sure every page of your site has an HTML title that includes your targeted query words in the title.
- Use a meta tag with keywords to add synonyms for words you use on the page itself.
- Use a meta tag to enter a page description.
- Be sure your Home page has links to the major parts of your site.

You'll find their FAQ page at:

Alta Vista FAQ

Seriously though, for most people it's a waste of time trying to figure out every little search engine nuance. Optimizing your site using the techniques I've outlined and spending the time saved on other promotions such as submitting articles to ezines, seeking reviews for your product, and gaining key links to your site will be a better use of your time.

33. Search Engine Submissons

At one time, a person could use software programs to submit your site to thousands of search engines, directories, and link pages. Now, most major search engines require you submit your site by hand. Never trust your site submission to the major search engines to a software program. It won't be indexed at some, and could cause penalties or even banishment.

I do use software to submit my site to all the lesser known search engines, directories, and link pages. It still works pretty well with them. How else are you going to find thousands of sites and submit your site to them? Having links at the lesser known search engines won't bring in a lot of traffic from any one particular source, but collectively it does add up. All those links also helps your site rank higher at the important search engines.

I do offer a submission service, but in all honesty you'd be smarter to buy your own software and be able to submit as many sites as often as you want, rather than paying me for a one time submission. You'll find links to my products and services and discount coupons in the Bonus Section. For the record, the submission software I use is Submit Wolf, from Trellian Software. They also have a submission service and guarantee certain results. I do highly recommend using your own software or a service to submit to the smaller search engines. Trellian has partnered with some of the major search engines so your site can be listed with them through their submission service too, and save you the trouble of hand submitting to each one individually. Of course, it isn't free, so you'll have to decide if your time or money is more important in this matter.

To make hand submitting your site as easy as possible for you, all the major search engines and many others are listed in the Resources section of this eBook. You can use those links to submit your site. Before submitting your site, prepare ahead of time.

Create a text file with the text you'll need at most search engines so you can easily copy and paste the information into their form fields. The information you need will vary with each search engine, and you'll have to ad lib some, but your preparations will pay off.

Here's what you'll need:

- Web site title
- Web site URL (address)
- A list of keywords
- A short description of your web site, 1 or 2 sentences
- A longer description of your web site, 3 or 4 sentences
- Your name and email address
- A listing of categories your web site would best fit into

Armed with that text file, you'll find the submissions process will go more smoothly and faster. The sad part is, many search engines are charging for listings, or charging just to look at your site with no guarantee they will list it. You'll have to decide for yourself if the price is worth the listing. Look around carefully though, some search engines make their paid submission forms easy to find, but still offer free submissions - you just have to hunt harder for them.

Learn More About Search Engines

In addition to my SEOS course, Search Engine Showdown is an interesting site with comparisons of major search engines in overall size (indexed sites), which sites bring the most unique results, which ones have the most dead links and more.

Some of the information is surprising, some isn't. For example, when submitting the same search term to multiple engines, Yahoo didn't bring up any results that couldn't be found at other search engines. That's not surprising because Yahoo is one of the slowest growing search sites. And when you consider they charge $299.00 per year to list your site, with no guarantee they will list it (but they'll

keep your $299.00 for looking at it), I think a very large percentage of sites aren't even bothering to submit to Yahoo anymore.

You'll find Search Engine Showdown at:

Search Engine Showdown

Search Engine Watch is also a fine site with much good information about search engines.

Search Engine Watch

My favorite site for inside search engine information is Planet Ocean's Search Engine News private site. It costs to belong, but they offer a "dog at it" guarantee. You can get a full refund even on the last day of your membership if you don't feel it's worth the price - just tell 'em the dog ate it! You'll find their site here:

Planet Ocean's Search Engine News (Recommended)

I've written a review of their site that you'll find here:

Planet Ocean Review

Two final points to make concerning search engines is how many pages can you submit at one time and how often can you submit them.

How many pages you can submit is determined by each search engine, and it varies. Some allow only one page in any 24 hour period, others allow up to 50. Many of the search engines will index most of your site by just submitting the index page. For the kind of site you're building, the index page is probably all you'll need to submit unless you're going to have a lot of other content on it.

How often you submit is up to you for the most part, but keep this in mind: if you re-submit your site too often, or without making meaningful changes, you could be penalized for spamming them. Bear in mind that it takes from a few days to a few months to get listed at search engines, depending on the engine.

Honestly, I submit mine once a year at most, sometimes longer. It's always right after I redesign. I think there are more productive things to do than work the search engines. In any case, I personally wouldn't resubmit a site more than once every 2 or 3 months.

34.   Getting Your eBook Reviewed for Publicity

Once you've written your eBook you'll want to find ways to get publicity for it. We've covered giving it away to ezine publishers for publicity, but there are also a few Internet parallels to the real world reviewers for real world publishers. While many traditional review sources for publishers are still closed to eBooks, there are some forward thinking review sources that now review eBooks. I've listed several of them below.

It's hard to say if these sites will have staying power, so don't be surprised of some have gone out of business. Like other lists in this eBook, when you come to the listing they are in alphabetical order, not a listing of best to worse.

When sending email inquiries about getting your eBook reviewed, follow a similar format to the example below unless other directions are given.

Hello,

I've written a new eBook and I'm writing to you to inquire about your submission guidelines for requesting a review. There is a brief description of it below my signature for your convenience.

Thank you in advance for your reply.

Kind regards, Dennis

Title: eBook Farming: How to Grow Money Selling Your Words and Ideas
Author: Dennis Gaskill
Word Count: 46,000+

Description: Teaches people how to create and sell eBooks by addressing such topics as generating topic ideas, researching, writing tips, breaking writers block,

software compilers, extensive resource lists, creating a web site for your eBook, and more. Quality of product is stressed a great deal, as well as ethics and other important keys to success.

Table of Contents: blah blah blah (The TOC is an optional item)

Feel free to change the wording to suit yourself, the point is to keep it short and not waste their time, and then include a bit of information about your eBook below your signature in case they do want to read more immediately. Those that are busy will appreciate you getting right to the point, and others will appreciate having the option of reading additional information.

Just remember, you're writing to professional writers and reviewers. That makes it very important that you write a professional sounding, well-thought out and formulated inquiry letter. Don't forget to punctuate it properly, to capitalize the first word of sentences and proper names, and to conduct yourself properly. Don't volunteer that it's your first eBook, don't use slang, don't beg but do be polite - in short, act the part of the professional writer!

?/b> Review Sources

The Charlotte Austin Review Ltd.

Send email inquiry to Charlotte Austin:

editor@charlotteaustinreviewltd.com

Web Site: The Charlotte Austin Review Ltd.

Crescent Blues

You have to print your eBook out and send it as hard copy to:

Crescent Blues
Attn: Editor

P. O. Box 3121
Arlington, VA 22203

Web Site: Crescent Blues

E-Book Connections

This site has large archive of e-book reviews and is home to the eBook Best Seller list. I'll bet you didn't know there was an eBook Best Seller list! For information on having your eBook reviewed, send a query to Jamie Engle:

editor@eBookConnections.com

Web Site: eBook Connections

eBookReviews.net

Submit your information using the submission form on this page:

eBookReviews.net

Foreword Magazine

Foreword Magazine may have been the first print trade publication to review eBooks. To have your eBook considered for review, send a query letter and brief synopsis to:

reviews@forewordmagazine.com

Web Site: Foreward Magazine

Inscriptions Magazine

A well respected writers publication, you need to send a blank email for submission guidelines by autoresponder:

Inscriptions_2@sendfree.com

For information about sending them a press release, send a blank email to:

inscriptions_3@sendfree.com

Web Site: Inscriptions Magazine

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Independent Publisher Book Awards

A $60.00 entry fee is required here and your competing with paper books as well.

Web Site: Independent Publisher Book Awards

Midwest Book Review

Publisher eBook submissions will be referred to one of their eBook specialists. Please email eBook review requests to:

mbr@execpc.com

Do not send any attachments. Your assigned eBook specialist will notify you as to the format and address required for actual eBook submissions.

Web Site: Midwest Book Review

SharpWriter

Send a query asking for review requirements to Joan Gillham:

joan@atrax.net.au

Web Site: SharpWriter

?/b> Other Publicity Outlets

eBook Broadcast

Press release style announcements, submit on site.

Web Site: eBook Broadcast

eBook Connections

Publishes a list of new e-book releases each month. To get your titles added, send an inquiry to:

editor@eBookConnections.com

Web Site: eBook Connections

~~eBookNet~~

Before I even finished this eBook, eBookNet bit the dust. Former members have started a new web site picking up where eBooknet left off. It looks like a good resource, and is now known as eBookWeb. It's still in the development stage as I write this. For information on publicity, visit their FAQ page:

Web Site: eBookWeb FAQ

I Love eBooks

Announcement list for new eBooks. To subscribe, send a blank email to:

iloveebooks-subscribe@topica.com

Web Site: I Love eBooks

Running River Reader

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For information on getting your title featured, contact Phyllis Rossiter Modeland at:

modeland@runningriver.com

Web Site: Running River

Often, eBook writers are eBook readers. You might want to join some discussion lists on the topic of eBooks and writing. Here are a couple that you might find useful:

E-Writers Club at Yahoo.com

Smallish group, but may be useful.

Web Site: E-Writers Club

The E-Book List

Discussion of topics related to e-book publishing. To subscribe, send an email to:

majordomo@exemplary.net

...with only the words: subscribe eBook-list in the body of the message.

?/b> Post a one time announcement for your new eBooks at:

Web Site: EBookFriends

Web Site: New eBook Announcements

You'll also be able to find a few newsgroups related to eBooks. If you have access to newsgroups through your ISP, two of them are:

comp.publish.electronic.misc
alt.books.electronic

For a huge list of writer resources where there are other outlets for your eBook:

The Authorized Directory of eBook Publishers

Web Site: The Authorized Directory of eBook Publishers

This is not a list of all the possibilities. You may also find topic specific sites that will review your related topic eBook if your product doesn't compete with theirs. It never hurts to ask.

35.   34 Other Places to List Your eBook

Below you'll find a variety of places you can list your eBook. These are not review sites as in the previous chapter, but some may have started reviews by the time this comes out. Always look around the web sites to be sure you've explored all the ways they can help you.

Some of the resources charge nothing to list your eBook, while others do. Of those that charge, fees can range from nominal monthly fees to a fairly good sized commission on sales. That doesn't necessarily make them a bad option. A site that sells 100 eBooks for you but keeps 50% of the price is better than a site that sells no eBooks for you and let's you keep it all! Be sure you read all the terms and conditions to be certain you're comfortable with them. Besides the varying percentages of sales that some of the sites keep for selling eBooks for you, some have committal requirements as long as 5 years.

Many of these sites also feature additional information and resources for eBook publishers, such as their own mailing lists they send new release announcements to, press release services, links to other places where you might list your eBook, compiler software reviews, and other eBook publisher resources.

Some of these sites will only let you submit free eBooks. But of those, some also let you submit excerpts or sample chapters. You can link to your full product within your free sample and have that many more outlets listing your eBook for you.

Again, these are in alphabetical order, not a listing of best to worse.

- 1st Books
- Atlantic Bridge
- Author's Den
- Books Portal
- Bootlocker

Bootlocker also offers a good print-on-demand (POD) service. For $199.00 you can have your book available in print form. If you choose the POD service they will sell it for you in print form as well as eBook style. You can order print versions of your book at wholesale prices to sell it alongside your digital version if you like. By charging more for the print version, it can make your digital version look like a better deal as long as you don't exaggerate the price too much.

- CNet's Download.com
- **?Submit to CNet at:** Upload Your eBook Here
- Cyber Read
- Dead End Street
- eBooks
- eBook Ad
- eBook Mall
- Ebooks N'Bytes
- eBook Palace
- EPIC
- eWriter
- Books on the Net
- eBook Jungle
- eBook Jungle is a search engine just for eBooks!
- Free eBooks
- Hard Shell Word Factory
- iBookTime
- KDH Books
- MC Promotions
- mPro's eBook Express
- My Publish
- New E-Book Announcements
- SearchKing
- The Book Zone
- The eBook Directory
- Word Wrangler

- ZDNet
- ?/b> Other sites, but it may be difficult to get in with them:
- Amazon
- Barnes and Noble
- Borders
- Mighty Words

Mighty Words is not for self-published eBooks, but you can sell 10-100 page reports in the Business, Computing, and Health fields. Might be just right for mini-projects, or let them sell selections from your eBook that can stand on its own without the rest of your eBook to support it.

?/b> Email Discussion Lists about eBooks:

To join, send a blank email to:

AnEbookChat-subscribe@onelist.com

Ebook_News-subscribe@onelist.com

Paid Submission Service

If you're short on time and don't mind spending a little money, eBook Submit will submit your eBook for you to about 100 sites.

eBook Submit

36. What to Do If You Can't Take Credit Cards

Today, consumers expect to be able to place an order online using a credit card. If they can't, they may suspect your business as being less than legitimate. If you can't take credit cards you will also lose most sales you might have made. You simply have to capture the order when they have the impulse to buy. Very few people will ever get around to ordering by traditional mail order.

If you can't take credit cards your options are to use an online processing service, start an affiliate program that will process orders, or to ask other eCommerce sites to sell the product for you for a percentage of the sales. You're on your own with that 3rd option, this section offers a list of 32 online order processing services. By choosing one of these services, you'll be able to take credit card orders. Affiliate programs are in the next section, which is the other option for taking online orders.

If you're selling digital content, such as an eBook, some will make the product instantly available to your customer, some offer a shopping cart application, and there are other features to compare as well.

As with entering any agreement or partnership, always read the small print. Be sure you are comfortable with the terms of service and fees they charge. The range of services and prices vary greatly, this isn't the area to be lazy about because it affects your bottom line. The bottom line is, watch your bottom line!

As with all the links in the eBook, these are listed in alphabetical order and do not represent a best to worst line up, and their listing here does not constitute an endorsement of their services.

However, I will say I do use Clickbank for affiliate programs and can recommend them if you're starting an affiliate program for your eBook. PayPal and Digibuy are also very popular from what others tell me, but I've never used them myself.

- Authorize It
- BeSeen's Buy It Button
- CardService Express
- Cardservice International
- CC Bill
- Clickbank (Recommended)

This is the company I used for my affiliate program for this eBook. That's right, you can earn commissions offering this eBook on your web site. Why not add a link in your eBook using your Clickbank affiliate free account and earn money after your eBook sale by steering people to my eBook?

- Credit Express
- DigiBuy
- eCharge
- Ecommerce Exchange
- Electronic Tranfer Inc.
- Ematic
- Globill Systems
- Heartland Payment Systems
- iBill
- Insta | bill
- Internet Networking Group
- Internet Secure
- iTransact
- Kagi
- MultiCards
- NFC Web
- PayCom
- Pay Flow
  - formerly known as CyberCash, now a Verisign company

- PayPal
- Perimele Pay2See
- Share It
- The Bag Boy
- Valid Pay
- Vantage Services, Inc.
- Verotel
  - also offers an affiliate type program
- Verza
  - also offers an affiliate type program

A final thought: you might want to pay attention to how fast these service providers sites load - it could be an indication of how fast ordering will be for your customers.

Another final thought :-): in case you weren't aware of it, ordering a product online is always slower than just loading a web page. The order has to go through secure server encryption, plus one or more CGI programs - all of which are slower than simply loading a web page.

37.   Create an Affiliate Program Easily and Cheaply

Affiliate programs can be administered by a third party or you can buy software and administer it yourself. I highly recommend 3rd party administration. Potential affiliates will have more confidence that they will be paid for the sales they send to you. Affiliates who trust their merchants are much more likely to be active, strong performers. Lack of trust is no small issue, as many self-run affiliate programs have cheated thousands of people out of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Other benefits of 3rd party administration is that it reduces your workload substantially, leaving you free for other activities; and they greatly decrease the time it takes to get an affiliate program up and running. Further benefits are that many affiliate program administrators, such as Clickbank, already have thousands and thousands of members which may choose to pick up your program. Another plus is that you don't need to have the technical expertise needed to set up the rather expensive affiliate program software. The disadvantage is that it's one more cut from your profits. I consider that a small price to pay for the benefits they offer, especially when you can often build their fees into your product pricing.

Some affiliate services will process the orders for you as well, eliminating the need for you to be able to accept credit cards. The benefits of creating an affiliate program don't stop there. If you have a good product, have a good sales presentation and conversion rate, and offer a decent commission to your affiliates, you will enjoy having dozens, perhaps hundreds of web sites linking to your product site. Imagine having a sales force of hundreds, and they don't get paid unless they make a sale!

Affiliate program administration services have a lot of variety in the services they offer. Some require you keep a deposit on account to pay affiliates and you have

to process the orders yourself, others require no deposit and they process orders for you, with everyone getting their cut on a schedule. Fees also vary greatly, so just as with any agreement or partnership, read the small print so that you know what your getting into.

As I said in the last section, I chose Clickbank to administer the affiliate program for this eBook. I chose them based on reputation, low set-up fees, ease of use, and an acceptable processing fee for each order.

As with others link lists, the following list is in alphabetical order and does not represent a rating system. This listing of sites does not constitute my endorsement of the products and services they offer, however, I will say Clickbank is the lowest cost to get into and one of the easiest to use, so I would suggest giving them serious consideration.

By the way, when you're looking at these sites, many of them refer to you as the Advertiser. You may not be used to looking for links as an advertiser so I thought I should mention it.

?/b> Affiliate Adminstators

- Affiliate Shop
- Automate Your Web Site
- Clickbank

This is the company I used for my affiliate program for this eBook.

- ClickTrade
- ClickXchange
- Commission Junction
- LinkShare
- PlugInGo
- Safe Audit

- Verotel
- Verza

?/b> Affiliate Software

Note: software solutions are not recommended for beginners due to the difficulty of installation. They also tend to be very expensive and you'll need to process your own credit cards for most of them.

- Affiliate Tracking Network
- Affiliate Zone
- AssocTrack
- My Affiliate Program
- ProTrack
- Commission Cart
- CyberTrakker
- eCommerce Control
- Sales Doubler
- Sales Manager

This is actually a shopping cart with an affiliate manager built in.

- Simple Affiliate
- The Ultimate Affiliate Package
- Your Affiliates

Once you have an affiliate program set up, you'll want to announce it on your web site, of course. But there are many directories where you can list your affiliate program and reach the kind of people that you're looking for on a much broader scale.

All directories work differently, but once your submission has been accepted most directory owners will join your program themselves and list your details using their affiliate ID so they can earn commissions too. Many of these directories are extremely popular web sites, so getting listed there can be a crucial step. A step that's not to be overlooked.

The directories are becoming more and more selective in deciding which programs they accept. They are looking to keep out scams and want to recommend quality programs so their reputation isn't harmed.

To increase your chances of being accepted in affiliate program directories, make sure you have a quality product and pay a fair commission, 20% or more is not uncommon. Also follow the five tips below before submitting:

1. Link to your affiliate page from your home page.
2. Publish your commission rates. If your commission structure uses a sliding scale, don't hide the lower payments in small print or do other things that make you look deceptive.
3. Develop and publish a privacy policy.
4. Fill out all fields on the submission forms. You won't be listed in some directories if you omit *anything*.
5. Be sure your web site offers a way for others to contact you.

38. 56 Places to List Your Affiliate Program

Here is a listing of places you may be able to list your affiliate program, depending on the product and how it's set up:

1. Active Income
2. 4AffiliatePrograms.com
3. ActiveIncome.com
4. Affiliate Advisor
5. Affiliate Channel
6. Affiliates Directory
7. Affiliate Forum
8. AffiliateFind.com
9. Affiliate Guide
10. Affiliate Junction
11. Affiliate Match
12. Affiliate Options Directory
13. Affiliate Programs Directory
14. Affiliate Promoter
15. AffiliationPro
16. Affiliate Trade Links Network
17. Affiliate World
18. Affiliates4U
19. Associate Cash.com
20. Associate-It
21. Associate Programs.com
22. AssociateSearch
23. Become An Affiliate
24. CashPile.com
25. Click Associates
26. Clickpartner
27. ClickQuick

28. Clicks2Lead
29. Clicks Link
30. Clicks People
31. Creative Opportunity.com
32. EasyCashMaker.com
33. Free Affiliate Programs.com
34. Gr1innovations.com
35. Hits4me.com
36. i-Revenue
37. LinksThatPay.com
38. Loaded Affiliate
39. Make Money Now
40. Masterclick
41. Opportunity Seekers
42. Profits-To-Go
43. PWDNet Online UK
44. Qango Revenue Street
45. Referral Madness
46. Refer-It
47. Revenue Makers
48. simplesiteUK
49. SiteCash.com
50. Start Earning
51. Top 10 Affiliates
52. Two Tier Program
53. Webmaster-Opportunities-Affiliate-Programs-Make-Money
54. Webmaster Programs
55. Webmasters Help Center
56. WebWorker

If you don't have time to visit all those sites, or are just in a hurry and you don't mind spending a little money, you might be interested in using an announcement service.

Affiliate Announce

Once you have an affiliate program in place, you'll need to actively seek affiliates. Besides listing your program in as many of the directories that you can, you should invite people to join on your web site, in your ezine if you publish one, and through ezine advertising if it fits your budget.

You could also try contacting specific web sites where you think it will do well. Don't spam with generic invitations! Write a sincere letter inquiring about a joint venture. Point out that you like their site, say something specific about it, and tell them how they can earn money by being your affiliate. Tell them you would never expect them to promote your product without first reviewing it, and offer them a free copy if they're interested.

Here is a sample joint venture query letter:

Hi (use their name if you can find it, and do try),

I'm writing to see if we can work together. I was just on your web site, (insert web site name here), and found it to my liking. I especially liked (insert something specific you like about their site here). It's obvious you strive for high quality, as do I. I have a joint venture to propose in hopes that you might consider it. I think it would be mutually beneficial.

I have a new eBook called (insert eBook title). I think your audience would be interested in it, and I've got an affiliate program for it so you can make money for recommending it. I don't want to waste your time, so I'll just briefly say that it's about (insert one or two sentences describing your eBook).

I wouldn't expect you to recommend it without reading it, so I'd be happy to give you a free copy if you're interested in working together. If, after reading it, you decide you'd like to work together, I'll be delighted to send you instructions on how to sign up. If you decide you're not interested, that's okay too, and you won't hear from me about it again.

Can I send you a copy?

Best regards, (your name)

PS: You can read more about it here: (insert web site address)

39. Reverse Marketing

One of my ezine subscribers wrote asking me about reverse marketing the other day. I'd never heard of it, but it piqued my curiosity so I set out to learn what I could about it.

In theory, it's an amazing concept for webmasters to build traffic to their sites and to sell products. It could also be used to recruit affiliates into your affiliate program.

You've probably seen free-for-all (FFA) link pages before. If not, they are pages that anyone can add their link to by filling in a couple form fields and pressing a submit button. There is also software and services that will submit your site to thousands of these link pages.

This is where reverse marketing comes into play. You can get one of these FFA pages from a service that is plugged in to the automated submission services, and set up an autoresponder provided by the services. Your autoresponder message thanks the submitter for submitting their site to your links page, and then you can pitch your site, or a product of yours, or an affiliate program product. The big search engines do this all the time.

It's extremely clever if it works, but most people that use these FFA pages to reverse market send their autoresponder message out immediately, and their message gets lost in hundreds of others. The better services allow you to delay your message so it goes to the submitter by itself, after the masses of other messages have long been deleted.

One service I found offering this guarantees your message will reach a minimum of 1,000 people a day. Since these people submitted their site to you, you can send them a one-time thank you note and promote whatever you have without spamming them. If it works, it's a pretty easy way to bring in visitors, sell products, and recruit affiliates.

The service itself also offers its own affiliate program. For each new affiliate you bring in you earn $4.00, and each affiliate your affiliate brings in you earn $4.00...and that's each month, not a one time pay out. The service I looked at charges $20.00 a month so if you bring 3 affiliates and your affiliates only bring in one each, your FFA page is free and you're actually making $4.00 for sending a thank you letter with your promotional message to at least 1,000 people a day. Intrigueing isn't it?

I don't know how well it works, but it's beautiful in theory. People submit their site to you, volunteering their email address which allows you to send a one-time thank you/confirmation message and include a promotional pitch. You have to admit, it's darn clever. I've just started a three month test of reverse marketing with this eBook to check it out.

It's supposed to be a secret technique of the big time marketers. Hey, I guess that makes me a tattletale! It's the same thing I've been doing with my reciprocal links page when someone adds their site to my reciprocal links, only on a much larger scale. I do sell a few products that way.

If you'd like to try it out or just read more about it:

LINK DELETED

While this was an interesting concept, I found it to be a total waste of money. There is always the chance that other products would work better than the two I tried, but I find that idea doubtful. My recommendation now is to not participate in this type of promotion. If you still want to try it for yourself, go to your favorite search engine and search for "FFA + autoresponders" and you should find plenty, but again, I think it's a waste of time and money.

I did leave this page in the eBook for one reason, so I could perhaps save you from wasting your time and money on the concept because sooner or later you'd probably run across a promotion for them and would have to make a decision whether to try them or not. Now you can make a more informed decision.

40. 27 Tips to Increase Sales

There are many things you can do to try to increase sales. Here is a list of ideas to get you started:

1. **The Power of Testimonials**

Use power of the personal recommendation at your web site and in promotional advertising. Testimonials help reduce the fear factor of buying a pig in poke by showing that others use your product and like it.

2. **Offer a Free Bonus or Bonuses**

Free bonuses give more perceived value to your product. Advertisers in every media have been offering free bonuses for "acting now" for decades. It's a proven sales booster.

3. **Offer a Rebate**

Any reason, such as an upcoming holiday, anniversary, or even a personal event or milestone is a good reason to offer a limited time rebate. People will feel they're getting a great deal if they act now. The limited time aspect promotes urgency, they have to act fast or they'll miss the window of opportunity to save. Be sure to remove your offer when you say it will expire. You'll increase sales, and will likely find few people ever get around to sending in the rebate - that's why the sales gimmick has long been popular.

You don't want someone mailing it in a year later though, because you can't determine how well your promotion worked until you see how many rebates are returned - besides, you've probably long since spent the money by then. So place a limit on how long a customer can wait to mail in the rebate. If your rebate offer

ends on May 30 and you allow them 30 days to mail in the rebate, they'll have until June 30th to mail them in. In that scenario, you'll only have to wait until about July 10th for all the rebates to come in. You will need to wait a few days past the deadline so that letters postmarked by June 30th (the last day the rebates are valid for) can arrive. Because there is also a holiday just after the deadline, you'll want to wait a few extra days.

4.   **Offer a Payment Plan**

If you have a merchant account and an expensive product, offer a payment plan. If your product is $60.00, in addition to an outright purchase you could offer three easy payments of $20.00 and bill their card monthly for three consecutive months. If you don't have a merchant account, you could break your eBook into three parts and let them purchase them one at a time. There is risk in that though. Part one and part two must sufficiently motivate people to buy the next part or they will not purchase the additional material.

5.   **Show How to Make Their Purchase Free**

Point out that if they join your affiliate program they only have to refer x number of sales and they've earned the product for free.

6.   **Demonstrate Value**

Show how purchasing your product can pay for itself by helping them save money or time. Example: This eBook will pay for itself in 3 months if you follow the strategies outlined; or, this eBook will save you hours of work each week, hours you can spend with your family or pursuing your hobbies and recreation. Then briefly explain how it accomplishes that without giving away any secrets.

7.   **Offer a Strong Guarantee**

A strong guarantee will increase sales enough to offset any refund requests, as long as your product lives up to what it is supposed to be. As with rebates, even many dissatisfied customers never get around to requesting a refund.

Some less than ethical people will take advantage of you and request a refund even though they plan to continue using your product or did enjoy it and know it was worth the money.

A strong guarantee will create more sales for you than you'll have to issue in refunds, if, as I said, it's a quality product. The bottom line is, customers want to know there is no risk if they find your product to be unsatisfactory.

8. **Offer a Referral Rebate or Freebie**

For a little twist on the rebate gimmick, tell folks that if they refer one other person who purchases your product, you'll refund x amount of the purchase price or give them another product or service free of charge. This could be a before sale or after sale incentive.

9. **Offer Delayed Payment**

If you have a merchant account, offer to delay debiting their card for 30, 60, or 90 days. All someone has to do if they don't want the product is delete it from their computer and cancel the order. As with the guarantee, there will be some dishonest people that will take advantage of you, but it's usually offset by increased sales. I think most people are honorable, especially if you place your trust and faith in them before they have to trust you.

10. **Offer Choices**

Create at least two versions of your product and pitch your lower cost version, then offer an upgrade to the deluxe version for only $x.xx more. You'll sell a few lower priced products to people that couldn't afford the big deluxe, and if your product is good many of them will upgrade.

11. **Communicate Timely**

Check your email often and respond quickly. I've made numerous sales because people were impressed with my timely responses to their inquiries. Of course, now that I get 200 - 300 or more emails a day, that's become difficult to do.

When you start getting email like that, you have to prioritize. Be sure to answer sales, customer service, and support issues first. Answering the rest can wait until the end.

12.   **Integrity**

Be fair, honest, ethical, and sincere. Old fashioned values are always in fashion.

13.   **Members Only**

Offer a "members only" section of your site as supplement to people who purchase your product. People like having a sense of belonging, and they like to know there is support readily available. It need be nothing more than additional articles and the pledge of new information as it becomes available. A message forum where users can interact with you and each other would be a strong plus.

14.   **Ask for Feedback**

Offer your buyers an incentive to complete an after-purchase survey once they've had time to evaluate your product. This isn't an exercise in ego building. Ask them how your product could be improved, what features should be added, have them rate different sections to identify weaknesses, and ask for their honest opinion. You'll get feedback that will help you improve your product which will help increase future sales, and hopefully you'll get some great testimonials to use. Be sure to ask permission to quote them before using their words, or at least make it known up front that your reserve the right to publish their comments.

15.   **Brainstorm**

Brainstorm with family, friends, and associates to stimulate ideas for increasing sales. Thank everyone sincerely that offers ideas whether you intend to use them or not. It might encourage them to offer another idea they're holding back. Who knows, the one they're holding back might be the gem of the bunch.

16.   **Exit Survey**

Offer a freebie to someone leaving your site without buying. This takes some advanced programming skills, but you might find it worth hiring someone to do it for you if you can't do it. The survey exit would ask folks why they decided not to buy, what would make the product more attractive so they would buy, and similar questions. If you offer a freebie related to your product, such as a free chapter or free excerpts, you have a chance to change their mind as they find value in your freebie. You might also invite them back to take another look after you've implemented changes if you keep their email address on file. If someone asks to be removed from your mailing though, always honor the request.

17.   Start a Newsletter

If you can consistently come up with new, original content, offering a free newsletter will give you access on a regular basis to people who haven't bought your products...yet. Getting in front of their eyeballs on a regular basis also breeds familiarity, which encourages trust. It should be published at least monthly, and no more than once or twice a week unless it's VERY short (or people may come to regard it as a chore that has to be done every day), but it should be published on a regular, predictable schedule. Sticking to a publishing schedule helps build confidence that you do and are what you say. As long as you offer quality content to offset the sales pitch you won't put off your readers.

18.   Target Your Customers

Everyone may be a prospect for your product or service, but your marketing efforts will produce the best results for the lowest cost when you know who the customers are with the greatest need for what you offer.

You might offer a freebie or upgrade to anyone that bought your product that is willing to fill out survey. You can make it an anonymous survey so they know their personal information will not be used in ways they don't like, such as being sold to spammers. Ask things like their age, sex, occupation, income range, location (but not their address), why they bought your product, marital status, if they have children; whatever is relevant to your product. This can help you see

what kind of people are buying it so you can spend more time targeting the right audience to increase your sales.

19.   **Advertise With an Information Request**

Include an opportunity for readers to request additional information from you with any ads you place. Offer free information related to your product or service to generate inquiries or web site traffic. Which leads to...

20.   **Collect Contact Information**

Most prospects won't buy the first time they hear or see your sales message. By requesting additional information as mentioned in the previous tip, a person has given you permission to contact them regarding your product. Send the free info, then follow up later and ask if they have any questions. Point out the sizzle again, and make a special offer. Honor all requests to be removed from your mailing list.

21.   **Always Test and Evaluate**

Test and evaluate the effectiveness of ads you use or things you do to promote business. Spend 80 percent of your time, energy, and money on the proven methods and test with 20 percent.

22.   **Point Out the Now-ness**

This may seem obvious, but many miss it. If you use a service like ClickBank or PayPal, point out that customers can have instant access to your product after they order.

23.   **Create a Bargain Bin**

As you develop several products, offer a bargain bin. Each week or month put a different product into the bargain bin and offer it at a discounted price. Limited time offers create an urgency to buy. Bargain bins now days take the form of

discount tables in department stores, people check them out closely looking for deals. It works online too.

24.   **Offer a Sale Notification**

Collect the email addresses of people that want to be notified when your product goes on sale. Best used on user exit if they leave your site without making a purchase.

25.   **Create a Challenge**

Offer a discount to people who can solve a riddle, identify a quote, answer a trivia question or some other challenge. Make it easy enough that most people can solve it, but not so easy that it's an obvious sales gimmick. You don't want to insult their intelligence. If they solve the riddle, they'll feel they've earned the discount, which means they've taken a mental step towards making it their own. People do want what they've earned.

26.   **Offer a Group Purchase Discount**

Let others help you sell your product by offering a discount for group purchases. Have them recruit one or two friends and sell them the product at a price less than the total value if purchased separately.

27.   **Offer Free Product Upgrades**

Offer free product upgrades (or discounted upgrades) for a year or two, or for life!

41.   Grammar Tips

Here are some commonly misused and abused words, and an example of reasonably proper usage:

a - an
These two articles are dictated by the sound of the word following them rather than by the letter, as is common belief. For consonant sounds use "a", for vowel sounds use "an" - as in; a hammer, an honor.

accept - except
I'll accept all your conditions except the second one. Accept means to agree or receive, except is a stipulation or condition, i.e., an exception.

advice - advise
Advice is a noun, advise is a verb. Advice is the actual words given that constitute someone's counsel, while advise is the act of giving counsel. I advise you to follow good advice.

affect - effect
The additive didn't affect the strength of the concrete, but it did have a discoloring effect. Most of the time, affect means to influence, effect is a result.

adverse - averse
Adverse describes difficulty or undesirable results. Averse indicates opposition. I'm not averse to your plan, but there may be adverse consequences.

all ready - already
All ready means "prepared" - already means "by now". Are you all ready already?

all right - alright
All right is always correct. Alright is slang.

alternate - alternative
Alternate means in turn; alternative indicates another option. Jim decided to alternate which days he would do yard work. His only other alternative was to hire someone else to do it.

anyone - any one
Anyone means any and/or all persons, any one means any single person or thing. If anyone has a question, you may direct it at any one of our panelists.

can - may
Can means to be able. May means to have permission or indicate a possibility. "I can play the guitar." ...is a statement saying you are able to play the guitar. "I may play the guitar." ...is a statement that you might play it, or that you have permission to play it.

climactic - climatic
Climactic means the apex, climatic is weather related. The climactic event that proved Noah wise was the climatic changes that resulted in rain for 40 days and 40 nights.

complement - compliment
To complement is to add value or harmony to something. Compliment means to flatter (loosely speaking). The colors complemented each other. Jake the Sleaze complimented her on her looks before asking for a date.

conscience - conscious
Conscience is a sense of right and wrong. Conscious means to be aware or awake. His conscience bothered him after he stole the candy bar because he was conscious that his actions were wrong.

device - devise
Device is an apparatus or gizmo. Devise means to invent or create. You can devise a plan to market your device.

elicit - illicit
Elicit is bring out, illicit is something unlawful. I was trying to elicit a response, but I wasn't looking for an illicit response.

farther - further
Farther refers to distance. Further refers to time or something abstract. If we drive farther, we can discuss this topic further.

its - it's
Its is possessive. It's is the contraction of it is. Substitute "it is" in place of the singular word to see which to use. If "it is" sounds wrong, use its.

lay - lie
Lay means to put or place an object. Lie means to recline. I'm going to lie down until you lay the carpet.

principal - principle
Principal is the head of a school or organization, principle is a basic truth or belief. The principal stood on his principles.

regardless - irregardless
Regardless is always correct, irregardless is slang.

then - than
Then refers to time, than refers to comparisons, I have an appointment then, but I'd rather come late than not at all.

they're - their - there
They're means they are, their is a possessive term, there indicates a place. Bob and Jim called, they're not coming over to pick up their packages so I placed them over there out of the way.

to - too - two
To is a preposition, too means also or excess, two is a number. Few people misuse two, but the others are mixed up all the time. Just remember, if it denotes

also or excess, use too; all the other times use to. If it's too much trouble to paint two rooms today, just paint one. Or go get some ice cream, who wants to paint?

who - whom
Who-do voodoo! Knowing when to use who or whom is a problem for many. Here's little trick to help you get it right. Think of the who-clause as a mini-sentence. If you can substitute he or she for the who/whom in question, it's a who. If you can substitute him or her for the who/whom in question, it's a whom. Example: Who is the rat the ate my candy bar. You wouldn't say "him is the rat" you would say "he is a rat,: so the correct word to use is who. That trick doesn't work all the time though, when in doubt, use who.

who's - whose
Who's is who is, whose means belonging to. Who's going to determine whose property this is.

you're - your
You're means you are, your is a possessive term. You're going to take your dog to the park.

?/b> Below are resources to sites of use to those trying to improve their English skills:

Commonly Confused Words
Common Errors in English
Guide to Grammar and Writing
Paradigm Online Writing Assistant
Purdue Online Writing Lab
Tips O'matic
Traditional Grammar - An Interactive Book
UVic Writer's Guide

42.   HTML and Meta tag Tools

Due to the PDF format's inability to include interactive JavaScript tools, the tools below will open a page from my web site.

Meta Tag Maker

The Meta Tag Maker will help you form your Description, Keywords, Owner, Author, Robots, and Revisit meta tags correctly. It's cool!

Character Counter

Many search engines have a limit on the number of characters you can have in your title, description meta tag, and keywords meta tag. This handy little tool counts the characters for you so you don't run afoul of the limits and risk having your site penalized. The limits are posted on the counter.

HTML Maker

The HTML Maker is a form you simply plug your information into and click a button and it creates a simple web page that will open in a new window. It's nothing fancy, but will do the trick if that's all you can do. You can then get the code for the page from the window that opens.

Color Tweaker

The Color Tweaker is a JavaScript utility that can assist you in finding the right colors for your links, text, background color or whatever you need a hex code color for. The background color of the page changes as you make adjustments clicking + or - buttons for red, green, and blue. Start with the negative values since the page loads with a white background (which is full color for all three). This tool is also linked to from the HTML Maker page.

More Web Site Building Help...

You'll find more help in building web pages on my web site. These links will open in a new window:

HTML Tutorials

There are many HTML tutorials on my site. From beginner stuff like how to add images, how to create links, and how to format text; to advanced tips and tricks like how to create tables, how to have a border on both sides of the page, and page transition effects.

CSS Tutorials

CSS is a great add-on to HTML, allowing you to use advanced layout techniques and cool stuff like colored scrollbars, form buttons with background images, and more.

Background Magic

Background Magic is my freeware program that lets you easily make web page (and eBook) backgrounds that are of professional quality. Just click a few buttons and bingo. Also makes matching buttons and banners and you can add the text that you want them to say. The Pro version allows you to import your own images and has more blending tiles. If you decide to upgrade to the Pro version, as an eBook Farming owner, I've made a few special offers available to you. Check the end of the book.

Web Site Design Made Easy

My book on web page design was written as a college text book because that's what my publisher wanted, but I wrote it as a stand alone product so you don't need the classroom to learn to make web pages. It's taking the college market by storm! It went into a second printing just 10 weeks after it was released. The first printing was 10,000 copies. Not bad, eh? If you decide to buy the book, as an eBook Farming owner, I've made a few special offers available to you. Check the end of the book.

Free Graphics

I also have tons of free graphics on my site. They're high quality and beautiful, but aren't really geared toward businesses. However, if you're creating an eBook that's NOT about business, you might find something you can use.

Web Site Hosting

If you build a web site for your eBook and need hosting, I do offer hosting in association with some very good friends of mine. I give it to you at their price, they just cut me a little percentage for bringing them new business. The prices are

about average. You can find cheaper hosting, but the personal service they offer is hard to beat.

Web Site Submissions

If you don't want to submit your own web site to the search engines, directories, and link pages I can do it for you. To be honest, you're better off buying the software rather than paying for a one-time submission. But, if you don't want to be bothered with that, I'll be happy to do it for you.

URL Alphabetizer

You didn't think I alphabetized all the links in this eBook by hand did you? Regularly $14.95, get it free with the purchase of Background Magic or my Web Site Design Made Easy book. See the coupons in the Special Offers on my Products section.

43. Final Encouragements

Ideas build and create wealth. Information products have long been one of the best ways to build a small fortune. Filling a need with a quality information product can create wealth as fast as nearly any other method, and much faster than any other way for the average person.

With the speed and low cost of product delivery on the Internet, with instant communications via email, chat rooms, and instant messenger software, one sale can easily lead to two more within minutes or hours instead of days or weeks. As the speed of the world increases, so has the respect for people who are in the know.

The new information world belongs to those who can develop and promote their own ideas. A product that's easy to get hooked on is a product that's easy for others to recommend, and that's the key to making sales or driving traffic to your site that come from beyond your own direct efforts.

But why do people help spread the word for you in the first place? To be helpful? Yes. To be more powerful? YES! In this fast Internet world people like to be on the cutting edge, the carrier of new ideas, the light in the dark. Telling others about things that can help, motivate, and enhance other people's lives raises their personal power level in their eyes and in the eyes of others.

Of course, while no one wants to be last in line at the popularity dance, few are brave enough to want to be first either. Your job is to convince them that your product and idea is a hot and happening thing.

Are you hyped? I'm trying to stoke your fire, not with false promises of instant millionaire status, but with the realization that wealth is available if you're willing to work hard and develop quality products.

The rewards can be very handsome, indeed. And it's all within your reach if you can believe it is. If you can motivate yourself to produce an excellent product, if you believe in the infinite abundance of the universe, then there are rewards waiting for you to claim them.

Don't worry, I'm not going to get into a philosophical discussion about how, if you can conceive it and believe it, you can achieve it. While true, that's not the point of this eBook. Besides, I've saved that stuff for the Personal Success Philosophy section for those that are interested in what I believe in and what motivates me.

But if you can't believe that you can make it happen and that there are rewards to match and exceed your efforts and faith, then you probably won't create as good a product as you would if you did believe it. The more you expect in the way of your product quality and the rewards for creating it, the harder you'll work to create the product that will provide those rewards.

Of course, that's dependent on if you have a good product idea to begin with. You could create the best instructions ever written on how to trim a catfish's whiskers and you'll still be disappointed with the results. There just aren't many people that will be interested in trimming up those darn whiskery ol' catfish!

As with most endeavors requiring skill, creating an eBook isn't necessarily a proposition where you win every time you play the game. It takes practice to be able to write effectively, to be able to organize logically, to be able to identify sales-worthy topics, and when necessary, to motivate your reader.

If you don't succeed with your first eBook, try and try again. You'll learn each time you do not succeed. Did you notice I didn't say each time you fail? You never truly fail until you fail to try. With each lack of success you move one step closer to success. When Thomas Edison was criticized for his inability to invent a working light bulb he remarked, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

He never gave up, and as we now know, he did succeed in creating the light bulb. Today, whenever we get an idea and that light bulb goes off in our head, we have Thomas Edison thank for never giving up. Can you imagine how much trouble it would be if oil lamps were going off in our head instead?

Supposing you have tried and failed again and again. You may have a fresh start any moment you choose, for this thing we call "failure" is not the falling down, but the staying down.
- Mary Pickford

That's not to say you can't give up on a product idea that you've worked inside out and back again. A truly dead horse is never going to get up and carry you to the promised land. Just don't give up on the idea of creating a successful information product.

Learn what you can from each attempt and dedicate yourself to creating a better product or developing a better product idea.

Give yourself little rewards for your efforts, but not in the same way most people reward themselves - with self-indulgence and revelry. Reward yourself by arranging a romantic evening alone with your spouse, or taking the children fishing, or volunteering your services to a worthwhile cause.

This will make your relationships stronger, better your community, and renew your spirit. As that happens, you'll feel better and better about yourself. Your self-esteem and self-confidence will rise, and you'll find your skills improving in many areas.

I also recommend a totally selfish reward, a small one just for you, but one that pays dividends. Buy an inspirational, motivational, or educational book. You'll learn, grow, and become inspired to new heights and new awareness by them.

You see, real success is all about expanding your mind and deepening your sense of life. That is one of the greatest secrets of success anyone can give you. Having the freedom to develop our whole being is something I consider a honor and privilege worthy of a king, and our duty for taking up space on planet earth.

Our education doesn't end when we graduate, it's just beginning. We're never grown up, we're always growing up. We don't become our best by growing older, we become our best by seeking out the best there is within us and pushing ourselves to new heights. We never fail, we learn what doesn't work. We never have anything to be ashamed of or fear for trying. No one's criticism can harm us unless we permit it. It's not what they say, it's how we internalize it that matters.

I've given you everything you need to create your own eBooks, except the topic and the actual words. That's the one thing you'll have to do on your own. You have everything to gain by following through with this notion of creating and selling your own eBook. Don't let anyone stand in your way, especially yourself. You can succeed if you choose to, so choose to.

See you at the bank!

44.   Personal Success Philosophy

You might ask, what is my Personal Success Philosophy doing in an eBook about creating an information product? Good question, and the reasons are these:

1. I want you to be successful with your eBook.
2. I believe our beliefs, thoughts, and character play a vital role in our success.
3. Friends encourage me to write more along these lines.
4. It can't hurt, and it might help.

I feel great when I can help people achieve something important to them, or help them learn something new, or to make their life better in some way. As I said in the beginning, I've left no stone unturned in trying to create the absolute best product I could. Even so, some people reading this section may think it's silly or all too obvious, but for others, new mental realms will be opened. They might even think I'm smarter than Cheese Whiz.

And I am smarter than Cheese Whiz too. I beat a jar of Cheese Whiz two out of three times in chess. Of course, the jar was only half-full.

This section deals with life, because realistically, you simply can't separate who you are and who you're becoming from your business activities and aspirations. You will always think and act from within your character. To succeed fully then, your character needs to be tuned in to the success foundations of life. To omit this section would be cheating some folks from discovering a missing key that they need to fully succeed.

If you've got life all figured out, if you're getting everything in life you want, then you might want to skip this section. Not that I have it all figured out, because I don't, but it took me years to figure out on my own what I do have figured out, so maybe the learning curve can be shortened for you. Frankly, I wish someone had sat me down and told me what you're about to read when I was a kid. I used to think I was below average in intelligence, sometimes I even thought I was

magnificently stupid. I know better now. There were just some mental doors that had never been opened before.

The universe is full of magical things, patiently waiting for our wits to grow sharper.
- Eden Phillpotts

The Power of Your Mind

There is more power in your mind and in your belief system than most people realize. This power can be used to receive or to block that which you hope for and work to attain.

When you strongly believe you can achieve or receive something, and combine that with your emotional support and a willingness to work for what you want, you stand a much greater chance of achieving your goals.

On the other hand, you can work like a dog toward something but if you really don't believe you can reach the goal, you probably won't. If you think you can or you can't...you're probably right!

People often confuse their hopes with their beliefs, and their wishes with their goals. Hoping something will happen or will turn out right is shallow, and easily forgotten when it doesn't occur, and finally dismissed as something that wasn't meant to be. Believing is far deeper. It pulls you toward that which you hope for and slowly pulls the people and events into your life that help you achieve your goals when you don't give up on them.

Wishing is wanting something without being willing to work for it. Goal setting is wishing for something and creating a plan of action to get it.

Belief and goal setting go hand in hand. Believe enough to set your wish as a goal and outline a plan to get it. See yourself working toward your goal. Imagine how it will feel to achieve your goal and visualize your goal successfully reached. See it, feel it, smell it, taste it, eat it, and digest it. Put your imagination and faith to work for you before you achieve it so that you can achieve it.

Belief and goal setting will help you put your hands on the prize you seek. Wishing and hoping will leave you empty handed.

Doubt looks backward for proof of failure, worry looks around for obstacles, faith looks ahead toward success.

When you think and act positively about something, you release positive energy that helps bring it about. When you think negatively, the opposite happens, and the negative energy prevents you from attaining your goal.

You've probably heard of positive thinking before, but this is deeper than that. It combines positive thinking with cause and effect, so it's better described as the power of positive action. It's been called reaping what you sow, the law of reciprocity, and many other things over the years, but the fact is, it flat out works. It's not an overnight process, but it works. It may sound a little kooky, especially if you're a person that believes in only what you can see and touch. If that's you, I offer this:

Joe decided he didn't believe in gravity. He couldn't see it, smell it, or touch it, and he decided he didn't want to be bound by science fiction. He went up to the top of a tall building and stepped off into space. Joe was a nice guy, but his disbelief in gravity didn't stop gravity from having its effect on him.

As with gravity, whether you believe or not in the power of positive or negative action, thinking, and energy, it will still have its effect on you according to the

energies you release. If you sow positive energies you'll reap positive results. It really is that simple when you strip away all the variables, doubts, and excuses from the picture.

Okay, I made that story about Joe up, but it illustrated the point. Perhaps a real life story on the power of positive thinking will be a better example for some of you reading this.

When I was in my mid-twenties I was diagnosed with hypoglycemia. I won't go into the details of what that is because it's unimportant. I was told it was something I'd have all my life, and I'd have to follow a special diet forever, and if the diet didn't work, at best, I would be on medication for the rest of my life. Most of the foods I enjoyed weren't on the list of foods I could eat. That just wasn't acceptable to me and I rebelled against the doctors orders.

I ate what I wanted, and every time I had a episode I used positive words and thinking about it. I imagined loading the disease onto a rocket ship and sending it into space. I pictured my own blood cells fighting the disease. And I used a positive mantra. I'm not a particularly religious person, but I found a Bible passage I liked that I repeated over and over in my mind when the symptoms occurred (By Jesus' stripes, I am healed). I rode out the symptoms and fought it each time it occurred, which was as much as 10 - 12 times per day. In 6 months, I was rid of the disease and I haven't had a recurrence since.

I was supposed to have that disease all my life. I'm in my mid-forties now and am still free from the disease. I've been rid of that "lifetime" disease for over 20 years now, and I firmly believe it's gone forever, never to plague me again. That, my friends, is real power. No one will ever convince me positive thinking and positive energy doesn't work, I know better from experience.

Changes

Whatever it is you seek, know that it may not come wrapped as you expect. It may be that you need to learn something new, or need to meet someone who will motivate or influence you in the right way, or steer you in a new direction, or that

you need to go through some kind of event that causes the changes needed to reach your goal.

This could be changes in attitude, changes in habit, changes in beliefs, or other mental, behavioral, or lifestyle traits; or it could be a change of location, or vocation, or any of a hundred other things.

This is where a lot of the How-to-Succeed books fall short. They address the mechanics of how to do something, but fail to address the fact that in order for you to reach your goal, it may be necessary for you to go through one or more changes in your life.

A favorite old saying goes, "if you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten."

When you work for something new in your life, it often necessitates a change or changes in you or around you before you can receive it. You must be open to rooting out your self-limiting beliefs and personal imperfections to win the prize. You must be willing to break free from your comfort zones and be willing to accept change, and, dare I say it... be willing grow your mind and develop your character to a higher level of being.

To have more than you've got, become more than you are.
- Jim Rohn

Some people strive for years trying this program or that program, jumping from idea to idea, and never really accomplish anything they truly want. They often only want the results, but aren't willing to accept the changes necessary or to put forth the effort it takes to achieve the results. They may only be trying for things because they think they should, not because they really want to. You have to want it, and you have to put forth the energy and effort. Life isn't about waiting

for your ship to come in, it's swimming out to meet it and climbing aboard and taking over the helm. To paraphrase William Ernest Henley, "you are the master of your fate, you are the captain of your soul."

Don't worry, you don't have to become perfect to have the things in life that you want, but you must be willing to make intentional progress as a human being. As you grow, your successes will grow with you. I say you must make intentional progress because unintentional progress is just aging, and a lot of people die of old age without the satisfaction of achieving their fondest dreams. Time and aging are the slowest of teachers, and they are Life's teachers of last resort. Unfortunately, they are the only teachers far too many know once they've ended their school years.

If I just work harder...

Many people work hard. But not everyone has an abundance in life. What's the difference between them? A factory worker goes to work, does his job and gets paid according to his pay rate. That's what he believes will happen and it does. He believes there is a fixed amount of money that his time is worth, that his piece of life's pie is only so big, and he receives according to that belief.

Someone with a less limiting belief knows the pie is big enough for everyone to live abundantly if they are only willing do what it takes to get it, and he receives more because he expects more. Your beliefs and expectations can help you receive that which you want, or block your ability to receive it.

Of course, you may have already gone through the changes you needed to begin down a more rewarding path in life. In no way am I pronouncing any judgments about your character. I'm merely pointing out some common reasons people don't reach the success they hope for. It could be that you have been through the changes you needed to move on to higher income and realities, and have just been awaiting the way to bring it about. Perhaps this is it.

Time is the fire in which we burn.
-Gene Roddenberry

Achieving lofty goals rarely happens quickly. Growth and change take time. Quality workmanship takes time. The rewards take time. How much time? No one can say. It depends on how far away you are from where you want to be, and how hard you're willing to work to get there. In a manner of speaking, you have to prove to the universe that you're serious and willing to persevere.

For a real life example, I started my web site as a hobby with the idea of turning it into a second income stream, and with a fuzzy end goal of eventually becoming self-employed through it - although I wasn't sure how that would ever happen.

Between my day job and my moonlighting, it took four years for my efforts to come to fruition in reaching my goal of self-employment. I worked from 12-16 hours a day, 7 days a week in either creating, promoting, or learning what I needed to know for my Internet aspirations; or working the day job for my material needs. I took very few days off, in fact, I didn't take a day off for about 2 years in the beginning, except for a funeral.

Was it hard work? Damn right! Was it worth it? Damn right! Now I set my own schedule. If I need time off I take it. Did I have to work that hard to succeed? Probably not.

It might have even been better if I had taken more time off to renew my energies and spirit, but I was a man on a mission. Before I started my web site I was laid off from a job and didn't know where I was going next in life. I didn't really have any trouble getting another job, but it wasn't a job I liked and I vowed to break free from the cycle of being dependent on an employer for my livelihood. I used my severance pay to buy my first computer.

Ironically, losing my job was probably the best thing that could have happened to me. I took a career assessment class at a tech school and what I discovered amazed me. They told me I could do anything in life that I wanted. Anything!

Hello! Remember me? I wasn't a good student in school. I used to think I was stupid. I graduated 75th out of a class of 175, not exactly stupid, but certainly nothing to brag about. Pretty average really, and now they're telling me I can do anything I want in life because I scored so high on the tests!

What changed in the years between graduation and my taking that series of tests? I never stopped learning when I graduated high school. I hated school, it bored me to pieces. I didn't really learn much more than reading, writing, math, and how to memorize in school. My real education began when I discovered the things I was interested in, but I graduated thinking I was unintelligent and somehow missing something that other people had. I couldn't have been more wrong. I had changed a great deal, but my old belief system hadn't changed in the same degree that I had. My old thought patterns and old beliefs had been holding me back!

We may need to learn more about a subject, but each of us has everything within us that we need to accomplish great things. We need to learn what our own special talents and abilities are and pursue them. We need to find what we love to do and do it. But most of all, we need to believe in ourselves. That was something I was desperately missing.

Are you better than me?

One mistake I often see people make is to compare themselves to others. You've seen it too, I'm sure. We should never compare ourselves to others, it's a loser's game. When you compare yourself to others you're either going to come up short and feel bad about it, or feel you're better than another human and grow in false pride. That's what comparing yourself to others is really about, looking for something in yourself to be proud of. Instead of discovering and developing your own self so you can have real pride instead of vainglory pride, the comparison

game leaves you always searching for more comparisons every time you need an ego boost. There is no need for it.

The only worthwhile comparison to make, is to compare yourself to yourself. Are you a better person now than you were last year? Are you smarter than you were last year? Have you done enough good to feel positive about your contributions to the betterment of the world?

Or have you grown more cynical? Have you become less ethical? Have you grown more hateful? These are the kinds of comparisons we should be making. They're the only ones that matter. Mark the growth or decay of your own character and soul to see which way in life you're heading.

When the going gets tough...

Most people that come up short of their goals have simply given up because they lose faith in themselves; or they have taken their inner eye off the prize and only see the work and commitment and have lost sight of the rewards; or are simply too impatient or lazy and decide the reward isn't worth the wait or the work. Many a battle would be won, if the soldier had reloaded his gun! One more step, one more corner turned, one more push toward the mark... might have been the final action needed to reach their goal. But because they gave up, they'll never know.

Nearly every man who develops an idea works at it up to the point where it looks impossible, and then gets discouraged. That's not the place to become discouraged.
- Thomas A. Edison

If doing better were easy, we'd all be doing better.

But how do we deepen our beliefs, expand our minds, and gain the new inner wisdom needed to cross the bridge from where we are to where we want to go in life?

I can only tell you what works for me, but I think as humans, we have enough in common that what works for me will work for you. Perhaps not to the same degree, but to some degree. It may be all you need, or it can be a starting point. After all, we all have a brain and some intelligence, we all have an inner life - call it your soul or spirit or essence or whatever - we all have emotions and are capable of motivating ourselves toward a goal, and we all have the resiliency needed for the trying times. That's everything we need, we just have to agree and put them to work for us.

Mental Food

The best way I know of to stop getting what you've always gotten and get more, is to feed your brain the right mental food. After all, if we knew better now, we'd do better now. So if we're not getting where we want to go, it should be obvious we have to do more to know more. Let me tell you a quick story to illustrate this point.

There was a man with two racing dogs. Each weekend he'd have them race against each other and he'd take bets, giving odds that encouraged people to bet on the dog he wanted them to bet on.

One week the black dog would win, and folks seeing this and considering the odds, would bet on the black dog the next weekend. But the white dog would win the next race. This was repeated again and again, with the odds and the bets always favoring the previous winning dog, and the other dog winning the next race. The man made his money this way, traveling to new towns each time the betting dried up.

When he was old and no longer raced dogs he was asked how he knew which dog was going to win the race. He answered that, each week he'd feed the dog he

wanted to win a healthy and plentiful diet, and just give the other dog enough to live on. The dog that ate well was always stronger, so it always won the race.

Our minds are like that. If we feed them a healthy diet they grow stronger and more creative. If we feed them junk food they stagnate and grow weaker. What you feed your mind determines where you're going in life.

Too many people feed their mind a steady diet of television and other mental junk food. Most television shows are designed to entertain you in some way, in other words, they help you kill time. There's nothing wrong with taking in a little entertainment in moderation, but killing time won't get you anywhere, except further along in your life with less time available. Do you really want to kill time? Or do you want to do more now so you can do and have what you want in life later?

Continuing to cling to the patterns you know, inhibits your ability to discover what you don't know.
- Eric Allenbaugh, Author

I love to read quotation books. You've probably noticed I've sprinkled a few around in this eBook. Great quotations are like little pearls of wisdom. They can enlighten you and spark worlds of thought you'd never have discovered on your own. When I see several quotes I like from the same author, I'll go to the library and check out his or her books, or go buy them. Great minds offer wisdom and insight that can prove nearly priceless to our future. And rather than learning about a specific topic, quotation books educate you in all areas of life and from viewpoints of a variety of great minds. It's a well-rounded education that supplements and enhances your thinking in all you do. Best of all, you can often find great quotation books at garage sales for pennies on the dollar! I love a bargain.

I also like to read educational books, inspirational or motivational books, and stories of personal triumph. People who have conquered the mountains you want to climb can be like a light in the black guiding your way.

But don't just read passively from cover to cover. As you discover insight and deep thoughts, stop and chew that mental cud! Think about what the writer is saying and let your mind wander in and out of the wisdom. Mentally digest it so it will nourish your own thoughts. This is how you make it your own, by letting your imagination run with the thoughts and wisdom you discover.

When you discover an "aha" and let it soak into your brain, it's like opening the door to a new room inside your head. You'll find all sorts of marvelous mental power in that room that you didn't know you owned. It was there all along, you just hadn't yet discovered the key to open the door.

Read, but read to learn and be motivated, not to be entertained.

Volunteerism

This is short, but it holds a deep truth so don't sell it short.

Volunteering a few hours a week to a worthwhile cause can build up your genuine self-esteem. By that I mean what you really think of yourself at the deepest levels. The kind of self-esteem that diminishes feelings of unworthiness, inadequacy, and self-doubt. The kind of self-esteem that is borne of connecting with the good inside of you and carries with you wherever you go.

We're not talking about ego-fluffing flattery here, which only makes you feel good for a few minutes, we're talking the real deal. Flattery can make you feel good, but it often only brings a shallow and temporary sense of worth. It doesn't sink down into your bones, it just sits there on your skin and let's you admire it for a moment, then it's gone. If you want to feel a substantial sense of self worth, volunteerism can do that.

When you give of yourself with no expectation of reward, your reward is internal, not missing in action. You just feel better about yourself as a person, and that's all self-esteem is, but it's a vital component in a successful life. There is no faster path to having a healthy sense of self worth that I know of than volunteering.

There are all sorts of worthwhile causes to volunteer for. There are organized causes like Meals on Wheels that deliver hot meals to elderly shut-ins, Big Brothers Big Sisters that provide role models to the children of one parent families, programs at libraries to help teach people to read, and many other things. You can also seek your own causes. Helping an elderly neighbor shovel snow or taking a shut-in shopping once a week, organizing a clothing drive for a family that lost their home in a fire, organizing a Christmas toy gathering for poor families - use your imagination to better a situation and feel the elation! It's your world, it's up to you to make it a better world.

21 Signs of Wisdom

Knowing you're becoming wiser is often hard to determine because it isn't an instant process, it's an evolution. Here are a few signs that indicate you're on the road toward wisdom.

1. You understand that failure is a result of trying something that didn't work out as you planned, not a description of you as a person. It's a result of an attempt at something, not a personal condition.
2. You know that success doesn't make you a good person anymore than failure makes you a bad person. Both are the outcome of an event, not a personal badge of honor or dishonor.
3. You know that many, perhaps most, of the troubles of the world are the result of men and women trying to force their self-importance on others, and you let your own character and other people honor you, rather than shouting "here I am, notice me!" You understand that true honor lies in deserving honors rather than receiving them.
4. You have made peace with your past. You live without anger, regret, and bitterness over yesterday's sorrows and tribulations. You understand life is

cause and effect, and that what you receive today is the effect of what you set in motion in the past.

5. You are mature enough to work toward goals that don't offer instant gratification, because you know your tomorrows depend on the things you do now. You work with a vision of a promising future, knowing that in good time you will be rewarded accordingly.

6. You have conquered the need to fish for compliments because you're comfortable with yourself and have learned to accept yourself for who you are, warts and all. You also intentionally strive to keep becoming a better and better person. You know that life isn't about finding yourself, it's about developing and evolving who you are into your highest self. It's an intentional and constant re-creation of your character into a better and better person as life goes on.

Great are they who see that the spiritual is stronger than any material force, that thoughts rule the world.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

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7. You focus on your responsibilities instead of your inabilities. You do the best you can with what you have to work with and don't blame others for the outcomes that are your responsibility.

8. You accept responsibility for your own happiness and don't burden others with the onus of making you happy. You know being happy or unhappy is a decision you make each day, and that you'll be about as happy as you make up your mind to be. (I'm referring to normal, daily life. I realize events like the death of a loved one can result in temporary sorrow over which you initially have little control. You do own the responsibility to decide when to quit being unhappy and get on with your life though. Your loved ones would want you to.)

9. You know that failure to stand up for what you believe is right is an invitation to being the victim of things gone wrong. You realize that all

that is required for wrongdoing to continue is for good people to do nothing. Apathy leads to victimization. At the same time, you also realize that you cannot save the world, but that you can lead the willing by setting a good example. You don't follow the crowd when the crowd is wrong, you follow your own conscience.

10. You have forgiven those who have done you wrong. You know that when we hold a grudge against someone we don't hurt them, we allow them to keep hurting us. Forgiving is necessary for us to move on in a healthy and prosperous way, but it doesn't mean allowing others to continue hurting you. You forgive them for yourself, but will hold them accountable for their actions.

11. You realize that true joy comes when you do things for others without seeking reward. You know that making the world a better place for those you come into contact with means you live in a better world too.

Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding...nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor.
- King Solomon (considered by many to be the wisest man that ever lived)

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12. You don't speak evil of others behind their back. You realize that when you point out the faults of others, that while one finger points at them, three fingers point back at you. You know that when we see something we don't like in others, often it's because there is a measure of that which we dislike in ourselves.

13. You work to keep your ego in check. You encourage others to talk about themselves without constantly turning the conversation back to you. You know they'll feel better for it, and that you'll learn more by listening than by talking. You have one mouth and two ears, so you're willing to listen twice as much as you talk when with the chatty. You know that to be

interesting to others is simply to be interested in others more than you are in talking about yourself.

14. You realize your education didn't end when you left school, but is an ongoing process. You make an effort to keep learning about your fields of interest, about yourself, about others, and about life in general.

15. You're willing to admit your mistakes, to apologize when it's appropriate, and to quickly forgive others when they apologize. Your sense of responsibility and generosity of spirit are a practice rather than an afterthought.

16. You're more grateful for the blessings you have than you are envious of the things you don't have. You see life as a gift to be cherished and look for the beauty in the world around you.

By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is the easiest; and third, by experience, which is the bitterest.
- Confucius

17. You have learned to love, to act out of love, and don't try to keep score of who has done more for whom. You know love doesn't keep a scorecard.

18. You've learned to accept others as they are, not how you want them to be. You respect other's opinions even though you disagree with them. You realize the only proper way to influence another is by example, by reason, and by encouraging them to think for themselves and do as they think is right, instead of trying to instill ready made opinions and behaviors in them. (I'm speaking of adults, not children who should be shaped and molded with gentle hands.)

19. You realize there is no such thing as a self made man or woman. You understand we are made up of little bits and pieces of everyone who has

ever influenced us. You know that to become more than we are, we need to continually seek to discover the best qualities in others and develop those qualities in ourselves.

20. You know that your thoughts and ideas are as important as anyone else's ideas, and their thoughts and ideas are as important as yours. You're not afraid to express yourself, nor are you afraid to consider with an open mind that someone else may have a better idea than you do. You're not afraid to stand by your ideas in the face of adversity, nor are you hesitant to admit someone else's idea is better if they've convinced you of that. You understand that intelligence isn't necessarily being the one to come up with the best ideas, but in being able to recognize them.

21. You do what you believe you should do rather than what is most convenient and/or easiest. You know that doing the right thing is more important than your personal comfort and convenience.

Ethics, Honesty, and Integrity

One of the greatest gifts my mother ever gave me was a lesson in honesty. I was about 8 or 9 years old and we'd been out shopping all day getting school supplies, new clothing for the new school year, and some things that she needed. I was young and full of energy, but all the shopping, heat, and humidity had worn my mother out.

We stopped in a drug store for our final purchase, a can of hair spray, and headed toward the car. We were 3 blocks from where we'd parked, and were over half way back to the car when my mom realized she had walked out of the drug store without paying for the can of hair spray. She was still carrying it in her hand. I don't think I ever saw her more embarrassed than at that moment.

Instead of going the shorter distance to the car and driving back, we turned right around and walked through the blistering heat back to the store, where mom explained what she'd done, apologized profusely, and paid for the hair spray. It was an unintentional lesson in honesty that I never forgot.

Sure, we can lie, cheat, and steal our way to some success, but at what cost? There is no satisfaction in knowing you cheated, lied, and faked your way to success; in fact, you won't feel successful at all if you have any conscience.

You'll feel like a cheat and a thief, and won't long enjoy your spoils. You'll always be pursuing the next gambit because the last one leaves you unsatisfied and empty. You'll always feel like you're missing something in life, because something is missing - your integrity.

Our integrity is the glue that binds our accomplishments to the satisfaction we should derive from them.

We must live up to our personal ethics to maintain our integrity. Our integrity is the glue that binds our accomplishments to the satisfaction we should derive from them. Without integrity, our satisfaction is but an illusion that quickly fades and our accomplishments become as dust, easily blown away by the foul winds of dishonor.

If that's not motivation enough to always act with integrity and good ethics, then know this: a bad reputation spreads like lightning on the Internet, with blinding speed and lashing out in every direction.

If you cheat and lie to people, word will get around and you'll be out of business before you reach success. You will be forced to look for your next scam. You will grow cold inside and you'll end up in a place you don't like.

I'm not referring to prison, although that could happen...but I mean you won't like yourself. If you don't like yourself, life gets mean. You can't get away from you, though many try through drugs and alcohol, but there is nowhere to hide from yourself, and there is no glory in a life wasted.

If you've been less than honest and ethical in the past, as I said earlier in the book, the past does not equal the future. You can begin anew at any moment you choose. It doesn't matter how old you are or what kind of things you've done. Each moment can be a new beginning. All that is necessary is your agreement.

Generosity of Spirit

When the word 'generosity' is spoken of someone, we usually think of a person who shares their material goods. We're taught to share as children. We took turns, shared our toys, our candy and other things, and often did so begrudgingly because we had to, the big people told us to.

There is an equally important generosity that isn't taught nearly as often, and the world would be a better place if it were. I'm talking about a generosity of spirit.

I think we're all guilty from time to time of acting with a less than generous spirit. Someone cuts us off in traffic and we blast our horn or even flip 'em the bird. We have a problem with our computer or software program and take it out on the poor tech support person who is just trying to earn a buck and isn't responsible for the problem. We take out our frustrations on family members because they tweaked us the wrong way at the wrong time.

Having generosity of spirit is simply giving someone a break whether they're right or wrong. I receive email every day asking me how to do this or that. Most people start off with a greeting and often say something nice. But some just write and demand answers without even so much as a hello, a thank you, a pleasantry of any kind, or even a signature. The following line is pasted in from one such letter:

"tell me how to make a new widnow open when a link is cliked"

That's all there was to it, I even left the misspellings intact. No hello, no signature, no thanks in advance. To me, that's pretty rude. I'm not their personal slave existing to do their bidding when they demand it. My first temptation was to tell the writer to write back when he has learned some manners...

...but then, I remembered to be generous of spirit and pointed him to the instructions on my web site. Don't get me wrong, I'm far from perfect and have my moments when I definitely will tell someone where to park their little red wagon, but I feel better about myself when I remember to be generous of spirit.

You will too, it's in our nature.

Side Note: the last person I told off was a Pastor who thought it was his duty to tell me everything he thought was wrong with me as a person...just by reading my ezine! His self-righteousness and position as a spokeman for God would have cowed a lot of people. The kind of confidence that comes from genuine self-esteem allows you to stand up for yourself no matter what kind of authority figure is before you. This guy was dead wrong, and I made no apologies for showing him the error of his thinking with surgical precision. I have the least tolerance for those who should know better. It's one of my weaknesses, I'll have to work on that.

Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Having a generous spirit carries other benefits with it besides just feeling good about ourselves. I firmly believe the good you do comes back to you, sometimes when you least expect it; sometimes when you need it most and you get exactly what you need at just the right time.

Being generous of spirit is just good business, good karma, and good for everyone around you. It simply makes the world a better place. It's releasing

positive energy into the universe that comes back to you in many ways. Positive energy builds and grows, negative energy destroys.

Have you ever met anyone you're always glad to see no matter what kind of lousy day you've had? If you think about it, I'll bet that person is someone who is generous of spirit; giving their time, their kindness, their attention, their sympathy...giving of themselves to you and most anyone else.

We can all be like that.

Generosity of spirit is hard to beat. It's hard to dislike anyone that has it going for them, and it's great for business. Generosity of all kinds finds it way back to you.

Attitude of Gratitude

Be grateful for what you have. Reflect upon the things in your life that you appreciate. If you appreciate what you have more, you will be given even more to appreciate. You'll also be happier with what you do have. Need help getting started? Learn to better appreciate:

- All the people in your life; your spouse, parents, children, relatives, friends, co-workers, the mailman who brings letters from distant loved ones, the policeman who stands ready risk his life to protect you in a moments notice, the cook at your favorite restaurant, anyone with a friendly smile, anyone at all. Everyone. Can you imagine life if you were the only person left? You'd appreciate anyone that came along then. Can you imagine life if everyone learned to appreciate everyone else? How much greater this world would be!
- Shelter, many have no home.
- Food and water, many go hungry and thirst every day.
- Your health, there's always someone in worse shape.
- Your intelligence, the fact that you're reading this means you're probably above average in smarts, not because I wrote it, but because you're going to write something!
- The beauty of nature. There is no finer art.
- Heat in the winter, it keeps you alive.

- Your life...you could lose it without warning.

Hip Hip Hooray, it's Time to Play!

Have fun doing something you enjoy each day. A card game, play catch with the kids, a crossword puzzle, whatever, it only takes an hour. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, as the saying goes. It doesn't do a heck of a lot for Jill either.

Furthermore, once or twice a week take a little more time to enjoy your family and friends, to travel and experience the world together, and to just enjoy being alive together. You don't have to go far. You don't have to be gone long. Just do it. Take a weekend getaway now and then, go to a ball game, go fishing, go swimming, whatever. If you don't get out and enjoy and experience life on a regular basis you're not only missing the boat, you're not even near the water.

Practice Your Goodness

Perform at least one act of kindness each day. Do a thoughtful, caring, unselfish thing for your loved ones and friends. When the opportunity arises, do an anonymous act of kindness for a stranger - don't look for rewards, you're making the world better. When you make the world better, realize that you live in the world so you've also made your world better.

Performing acts of kindness not only makes the world a better place, but it makes us feel better about ourselves. The better you feel about yourself, the more genuine self-confidence you'll have. The more self-confidence you have, the more you'll believe in your ability to reach your goals and the more you'll feel deserving of the rewards that come with reaching your goals. *sigh* This stuff is really easy isn't it?

Finish Some Things!

Too many people start things they never finish and get in the habit of quitting when the going gets tough. That's a sure-fire way to never break free from the "do what you've always done to get what you've always gotten" rut.

Complete a little task each day as you work toward a bigger task. Finishing one small task each day gives you the experience and satisfaction of completing what you start and builds a pattern for success toward finishing the larger and more difficult projects you start.

The best way to break a bad habit is to replace it with a good habit. Once you get in the habit of finishing the things you start, you're on your way to ending bad habits like procrastination, giving up too easily, and looking for satisfaction and happiness outside of yourself instead of within yourself. You'll slay the dragons of doubt and delay without fighting them directly. Hey, that's an injury free battle!

In Closing

You know, in reading all this personal success philosophy business over as I edited this, I had the thought that it makes me sound pretty good. To tell you the truth, I'm better on paper than in real life. I'm far from perfect, as my wife will attest to if pressed on the subject. I make my share of mistakes, lose my temper occasionally, have doubts and insecurities, and share all the human foibles that plague all of humanity. Despite the rumors that I'm an alien, I really am human too. I thought it was important for you to realize these are my ideals, and I don't always live up to them - no one can - but that shouldn't stop anyone from trying.

I'm telling you this because hopefully you're inspired enough to make self-development a part of your life too, and I want you to realize that you will make strides, but you will also disappoint yourself from time to time. The important thing is to keep your eye on your ideals. When you slip up occasionally, don't condemn yourself and throw in the towel. Just remind yourself of your goals and ideals and begin again. Each time you'll move a little closer to achieving your goals in life, as long as you never quit trying.

Perfection isn't something we can achieve in human form, progress is very achievable. And progress is what takes us from where we are to where we want to be.

Many people lament getting older, I enjoy it. Gaining wisdom, self-control, confidence, improving old skills and developing new skills, developing character, learning to live and to love more fully...this is the stuff life is made of! When I step up to the smorgasboard of life, I want to eat a heaping helping!

Here is a truth: the more you grow as a person in this thing called life, the better you'll enjoy living it.

When people ask me "how's it going" or something similar, I usually answer with something like, "If it gets any better I'll need two of me just to stand it." They think I'm trying to be funny, and I guess I am a little bit, but there's a bit of truth to that too. Sometimes, life can be so good that you almost feel like a giggling little kid again, barely able to contain your glee.

In no way am I dismissing the need for money, companionship, shelter, or any other material or emotional needs; but most people go about seeking what they want backwards if you ask me. They work for the rewards of success and assume or hope they're worthy, instead of developing the qualities of success within themselves so the rewards can follow naturally. It's like wanting to be loved without being lovable. It's a self-limiting modus operandi.

Don't limit yourself in life by only working at the things in the outer world, because all the best stuff comes by living from the inside out. As Grandma Moses said...

"Life is what you make it, always has been, always will be."

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46.   Online Resources

Disclaimer:

This eBook lists over 2,000 links to resource sites, software programs, and other places of interest regarding the subject matter. Because they are listed here does not constitute an endorsement on my part of any products or services offered by these sites.

This eBook is intended as a guide to help you publish, and profit from, your own eBooks. Any business you conduct with the resource sites listed is your business, and it's your responsibility to investigate any product or service offered. Your business, your decisions, your responsibility. Hey, just like in real life!

Links Knowledge:

These links were all working when this product was developed. If you can't access a particular link, try it again. Sometimes data packets are lost, a link request will time out before the server responds, and Internet bottlenecks prevent you from reaching some sites. Just hit the refresh/reload button on your browser, there is no need to go back to the page with the link.

Servers also go down occasionally. If you can't reach a site by trying it again or hitting the reload/refresh button, try at a later time. Some links are not to the front page of a site and the page could have been removed or renamed. Try the site's home page to find the new link. To find the homepage, simply backspace out the portion of the link that goes beyond the .com, .net. or .org extension.

Sites do go out of business too, so it is always possible that a hard to reach site has packed up its pixels and left the digital planet. I made every effort to provide comprehensive and reliable resources, but link rot happens.

Below is an index to the various resources sorted by resource type, the links are all on this page, the index jumps you down to the area you want. Please be aware that many of the sites below could easily fit into multiple categories. I tried to place them where I thought they best fit. If you disagree with the placement of any of the links, go stand on your head until you do agree. ;o)

There are almost 1,800 resources listed! Add those to the ones in the rest of the eBook and there are over 2,000 links. I think I'll have to recruit some volunteers next time. That part of creating this product was a pain in the ... by golly, it really was.

Jumpstation to the Links Below

- Arts and Entertainment
- Free eBooks
- Freeware and Sharware
- Learning Resources
- Miscellaneous Resources
- Publishers
- Reference Material
- Research Resources
- Search Engines, Directories, Link Resources
- Search Engine Submission Software and Resources
- Shopping Carts
- U.S. Government Sites
- U.S. State Sites
- Writing Related Links

Note: you have to be connected to the Internet for the links below to work. All links will open in a new window so you won't have the eBook restrictions and limitations on the sites you visit.

Arts and Entertainment

All Music Guide
Association of Film Commissions
Aria Database
ArtLex
Billboard Charts
BoxOffice Guru
Cinematter
Cinemedia
Coming Attractions
Cyberspace Film School
Documentary Films
Done Deal
Early Motion Pictures (1897-1916)
ELACTheatre
Entertainment News Daily
Episode Guides
EuroScreenwriters
Fametracker
Film Festivals Server
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco
Fred Astaire.Net
Fuller Up, The Dead Musician Directory
GIST
Golden Turkey Awards
Greatest Films

Harvest Moon Publishing
Inside Film Magazine Online
Intertainment Cybercenter
Kyrie's Architecture Page
LittleGoldenGuy.com
Motion Picture
Museum of Modern Art
National Cable Television Association

National Museum of Women in the Arts
Red Hot Jazz Archive
Release Dates
RIAA Gold & Platinum Database
Screaming in the Celluloid Jungle
Screenwriters & Playwrights Home Page
Screenwriters Utopia
Spec Screenplay Website
Stars' Agents
The Costume Gallery's Research Library
The Country Music Search Engine
The Hollywood 10
The Internet Movie Database
The Silent Artists Index
The Trailer Park
The Worst Movies on Earth
TV Party
Westerns.com
Yahoo! Movies
Yesterdayland

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Free eBooks

Adobe eBook Store
BookIdea Magazine
BookZonePro Publishing Resources
Download.com
Internet Addz Free eBooks about Marketing
NetLibrary
Spawn :Small Publishers, Artists and Writers Network.
Writers Digest
Writers Guild of America

Writers Net
Writers Write

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Freeware and Shareware

1SmartSite.com
32 Bit Software Archive
AidAim Software
AladdinSoft Media
Albert's Ambry
Allen's Windows 95/98 Applications List
Amiga Web Directory
Archivers.8m.com
Baxendale.net
BB Shareware.Com
BeezleWare
Benchmark Comparison Lists
Benchmark Programs
Best Free Internet Software
Binaries.org
Black Stump Shareware Directory
BMT Micro
Breezin Software
BTSoftware
CD Archive Inc
Cheapware
Children's Shareware and More
Clayton's Shareware page
Clicked Shareware Gallery
Completely Free Software
Consumate Winsock Apps List
CoolLabel
Dave Central

David Dupre's OS/2 Focus
DemoNet
DigitalCandle
DLR Fresh Software Archive
Download Freeware/Shareware
Download.com
Download.Net
DownLoad32.com
DownloadShareware.com
Dr. Download
Dr. Shareware
Essential Shareware Pages

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File Farm
File Mine
File Pile
Files4all
Filetransit.com
Filez
Frank's World O` Windows
Free Software Shack
FreeAppsWeb
Freehound
Freeware Downloads
Freeware Network
Freeware Sniper
Freeware32.Com
Galt Technology
Garbo Anonymous FTP
Goodsol Development Inc.
Grabware.com
Greatis Sofware
Harris' Hangar 95

IBM and Lotus Software Download Library
Indian Shareware
InfoMac Hyperarchive
InfoNymph
IPC Software
James Carr Shareware for PowerBBS
JavaShareware
JLC Archive
Jumbo!
Justin Weber's Computing Center
Kishore's Shareware Page
Latest Utility Shareware for Windows 95/NT
Mac Central
Mac Medic's Version Tracker
Mac Picks
Macintosh Software Catalog
Malek's Win95 Tips Page
Microsoft Home Page
Mjksoft
My Desktop
My Shareware Page

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NetworkingFiles.com
No Nags
Only The Best Apps
OS2Ware
PacInfo Software Archive
Papa Winsock L
Pass The Shareware Please
PC Magazine's Downloadable Files Area
PC Tools and Utilities
PCWorld.com - Downloads
Personal Microcosm's Shareware

Process's Windows95 FTP Site
ProgramFiles.com
Public Software Library
QuickFiles
RegSoft
ReviewNow.com
Rocket Download
Sander's KeyScreen Previewer
Schaft's Windows Shareware Archive
SemiColon Software
Share It!
Shareware Central
Shareware Junkies
Shareware Place
Shareware Sites Listings
Shareware Stockpile
Shareware.com
SHAREWARE.NETwork
Silicon Alley
Slaughterhouse
Smart Guyz
Soft Seek
SoftCircuits
Software Den
Software Labs
Software Site
Software USA
SoftwareArchives.com
Sounds English

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Stardust Winsock Software Directory
Stormy Weather SoftWare
Subloads

Super Shareware
Surf Madison
Swiss Mac Shareware
TecoTown
the.zone
Today's Cool Tool
Tools Of The Net
W3 Web and HTML Tools
Try and Buy
TUCOWS Shareware
Tudogs
UK Shareware
Ultimate Macintosh
Useful Site
UTexas Mac Archive
Volftp
Wexes Inc.
Windows 95 Application List
Windows NT Active X Server BBS
WindowsPlanet
Winfiles
Winshare
WinSite Archive
WSO Software
WUGNET Shareware Hall of Fame
ZDNet Downloads
ZDNET Downloads :alternative site

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Learning Resources

Ask Oxford
Bartleby
Books and Writers

Center for International Earth Science Information Network
Encyclopedia.com
Expert.com
Gateway to Library Catalogs
Martindale's * The Reference Desk
National Archives and Records Administration
Pro Quest
Roberts Rules of Order
Statistics Every Writer Should Know
the Glossarist
The Invisible Web
The World Factbook
University Libraries
University of Virginia's E-Book Library
WebData.com
WebSeed Directory
World Newspapers Directory
WWW Virtual Library

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Miscellaneous Resources

Absolutely Positively Useless :trivia
Achoo
Acses Bookfinder
Aesop's Fables
All Freelance
Alphabetical List of Specific Diseases/Disorders
AltaVista Translation Page
American Bar Association
American Civil Liberties Union
American Family Immigration History Center
Ancestry
Art Bell (alien culture, conspiracies, etc.)

Autopsy
Bibliofind
Blogger
Calculator.com
Calendar Zone
CDC Diseases Information Page
ClicheFinder
Cyber Atlas
Cyberlaw Encyclopedia
CyberTip 4 the Day
Decisions of the U.S.Supreme Court
Dialog
Did You Know?
dMarie's Time Capsule
Document Center
Douglass Archives of American Public Address
Early America Archives
Eatonweb Blog Portal
ebrary
Electronic Frontier Foundation
Eighteenth Century Studies
EINet Galaxy Law List
Emerging Infectious Diseases
Faerie Lore and Literature
Famous Trials
FBI's Ten Most Wanted Fugitives
Freetranslation.com
Gang Land
Groksoup Blog
Hickok's Sports History
History Buff's Homepage
Historynet
Household Cyclopedia

Hugo Awards
HyperHistory Online

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Inaugural Addresses
Infoguys
Internet FAQ Consortium
Internet ScamBusters
Internet Search FAQ
KnowPost
Law Related Newsgroups
Law schools and Legal Associations
Legends
Libweb
Medal of Honor Citations
Medicine Online Inc.
MedPedia
Namebase
National Archives and Records Administration
National Coalition Against Censorship
NetLibrary
Nolo's Legal Encyclopedia
Omni Health and Medicine
On-Line Medical Dictionary
Online Spy
PoliceScanner.com
PR Web :free press release service
ProfNet
Project Gutenberg :public domain texts
Questia
Rulers
Russian History
RxList
Search Engine Watch

Sherlockian Holmepage
Supreme Court Decisions
The American Civil War Homepage
The British Monarchy
The Collected Works of Shakespeare
The ETEXT Archives
The Historical Text Archive
The Online Medieval and Classical Library
The Patent Office (UK)
The Phobia List
The Smoking Gun
The Spire Project
The Works of Shakespeare Online
THOMAS Legislative Information on the Net
U.S. History OutLoud
Virtual Medical Center
Web Sites for the History Profession
WGA Research Links
Women in American History
World Intellectual Property Organization
World Wide Legal Information Association
Yahoo Web Ring Directory
Yosemite Park Centennial 1890-1990: A History
Your Weight on Other Planets (Just for fun :)

Publishers

There are links to eBook publishers, standard publishers, and subsidy publishers. If your eBook does well, or if you have other writings, you might want to look for a real world publishers to publish your book for you. It was a lot of extra work for me to add this section, but you're worth it!

1stBooks
4GoodBooks
A Critical Mass Publisher
A Good Read
Abby the Troll Publications, LLC
Aerrius.com LLC
A Good Book
Alexander Street Press
Alexandria Digital Literature
Allandale Online Publishing
Allstory.com, Inc.
Amazon eBookstore
AmikTech Inc.
Anamnesis Press
ArtemisPress
Artmedia Publishing
Athina Publishing
Atlantic Bridge Publishing
Avid Press
Awe-Struck E-Books
Bananafish
Barnes and Noble eBookstore
Belgrave House
Blue Ear Store
bob-e-books.com
Book-On-Disc
Bookbooters
Bookhome Publishing
Fabjob
Booklocker
Bookmice
Books OnScreen
Bookzone
Boson Books

Business Book Press
CCI Publishing
Challenger Books
Classics Unleashed
Clocktower Books
Crossroads Publishing
Crowsnest Books
Cybereditions Corporation Ltd.
CyberRead

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Dark Star Publications
Dead End Street Publications
Denlinger's Publishers
DenMark Publishing
Disc-Us Books, Inc.
DiskUs Publishing
DLSIJ Press
Domhan Books
Dream Jobs To Go
Dynamic Patterns
E-dition
E-Pub2000
e-Publishing Australia
E-Pulp
Eastgate Systems
EbookoMatic
EBooks On The Net
eBooks
Ebooksonthe.net
Eggplant Literary Productions
eKIDna eBooks
Electric Bookworm
ElectricStory.com

Electron Press
Elwood eBooks LLC
Embiid Publishing
Epub2k
Fablegraze Publishing
Fictionwise.com
Firstprint.com
Fjord Press
Free-Fiction.com
Gemini Books
Grea tUNpublished
Half of Eight Pty. Ltd.
Hard Shell Word Factory
Hidden Knowledge
Hope Springs Press
Intellectua.com
Internet Book Company
iPictureBooks
iPublish
ITcomsys
iUniverse.com

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Jacobyte Books
Kripgansbooks-ebook-Verlag
Kudlicka Publishing
Lantern Books
Liace Publishing
Lionheart Publishing, Inc.
LionHearted Publishing
Livewire Publishing
Logos Research Systems, Inc.
London Circle Publishing
LTDBooks

M-Pro Bookstore
MapleInk Publishing
Memoware
MightyWords
Mind Like Water
Mountain View Publishing
Mushroom eBooks
Mushroom Publishing
Mystic-Ink Publishing
Neighborhood Press
New Concepts Publishing
New Media Publishing
NexusTeq Publications
Nitelinks
NovelWriter
Online Originals
Orpheus Romance
PageFree Publishing
Palm Digital Media
PC-Books
PDABookstore.com
Peduncle Press, Inc.
PerfectBound
Phoenix Library
Pocketmanager.com
Powells eBook Editions
PreviewPort
Primal Publishing
Private Ice Publications
PublishingOnline.com
Pulsar Books
Questia Media, Inc
Qvadis Library
Readers Network

Red-e2
Renaissance eBooks
Rogue Publishing
Rowan Press, Inc.

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Sands Publishing
Saxco eBooks
Scorpius Digital Publishing
SeeSpotBooks.com
SelfHelpBooksNow.com
Serendipity Systems
Shyflower Press
Sirius Publications
Spilled Candy
Spirit Lake Press
Starfire Systems
Starlight Writer Publications
Stinky Dog Press
Street Saint Publications
TELOS - The Electronic Library of Science
The E-Book Directory
The Electronic Book Company
The Fiction Works
The Sugarbaker Press
Three Owls Press
Times Two Publishing
Travel Writer's Marketplace
Treble Heart Books
Twilight Times Books
Under the Covers Book Reviews
US Times Bestseller List & Review
VelSoft
Virtual Volumes

Wakefield Publishing
WebGrammar
Weblications.Net
Western Writers of America
Wolf Dragon Publishing
Women Writing the West
Women's Studies Links of Interest
Word Weaving
Word Wrangler Publishing, Inc.
Wordbeams
Wordsmith's WebBook
WordsWorth Communications
World Romance Writers
Write4kidsv
Writer's Center - Maryland's Literary Resource Center
WriteOnLine Publishing Company
Writers
Write Touch
Writer's Digest
Writer's Exchange E-Publishing
Writers Guild of America
Writer's Hood
Writers' International Network
Writers' Journal
Writer's Way
Writer's Write
Writing Classes
Wyoming Writers, Inc.
XC Publishing
Xlibris
Young Writers Club
Zander Publications
Zeus Publications

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Reference Material

A Web of On-Line Dictionaries
Acronym Finder
American Sign Language Dictionary
Ariga Yiddish Words
Dictionary.com
List of Dictionaries
Merriam-Webster
My Virtual Reference Desk
NASA Thesaurus
OneLook Dictionaries
Online Conversion
Phone Number Reference Section
Reference Desk
Reference.com
Research It
Rhyming Dictionary
RxList
SYMBOLS.com
The Slot
The Time Zone Page
The Totally Unofficial Rap Dictionary
The Word Spy
Thesaurus.com
THOR: The Online Resource
Time Zone Converter
Travlang's Translating Dictionaries
Universal Currency Converter
WordNet
Wordsmyth :looks up "spelled like" words.
World Wide Words
Your Dictionary

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Research Resources

3-D Starmaps (Astrology)
ABC News Country Profiles
Acronym and Abbreviation List
Acronym Finder
Airline History Pages
Airliners.net
AJR Newslink Magazines
AJR Newslink Newspaper Index
Allexperts.com
American Family Immigration History Center
American Secular Holidays Calendar
Ameristat
Animal Terms for Baby, Male, Female, and Group
Ask An Expert
Ask Eric
Ask Me
Association Central
Association of Independent Information Professionals
Associations Directory
Babel Computer Acronyms
Bartlett's Familiar Quotations
Baseball Statistics and History
BBC News
Behind The Name
Best of Breed Online
Bible Browser
Bible Gateway
Bibliomania
Billion Dollar U.S. Weather Disasters (1980-1998)
Biographical Dictionary
Biography-Center

Biography.com
Biotechnology Information Center
Birding On The Web
Britannica.com
Bullfinch's Mythology
Calendars Through The Ages
Chicago Tribune
City.Net
CNN Interactive
College and University Home Pages
Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal
Compendium of Common Knowledge: 1558-1603
Country Studies
Crash Database (Airlines)

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Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships
Drudge Report
Ecclesiastical Calendar
eHow
eNature.com
Encyclopedia Britannica Guide to Black History
Encyclopedia of Conspiracies
eNews
Entertainment Weekly
ERIC
Ethnologue
EurekAlert
Everyrule.com
Excite Live!
Extreme Weather Sourcebook 2001
Faerie Lore and Literature
FAQ Finder
Find Articles

FishBase
Foreignword.com
Forensic Science Web Pages
Forensics Firearm Identification
Frank Potter's Science Gems
Freetranslation.com
French Reference Library
Fuller Up, The Dead Musician Directory
Gallery of Obscure Patents
Glass Encyclopedia
Glossary of Construction Terms
Glossary of Hardboiled Slang
Health Central
Hickok's Sports History
Holidays on the Net
Hoover's Online
HouseHold Cyclopedia
How Stuff Works
How Things Work
In-Box Direct
Inc.com Research
Inflation Calculator
InfoMine
Infonation
Information on Militias
Information Please Almanac
Infowar.com
Ingenta
International Atlas
Internet FAQ Archives
Internet Hockey Database
Internet Public Library

Jane's Internet Defence Glossary
Jargon File Resources
Journalist's Guide for Finding Data on the Internet
Kiosk: Journal of Geopolitics
KRS Radio World
L.A. Weekly
Last Minute News
Latent Print Examination
Learnfree
Legal Dictionary
Legends
Librarian's Index to the Internet
Librarians Index to the Internet
Lighthouse Explorer Database
Lives
Lives, the Biography Resource
London Times
Lonely Planet
Los Angeles Times
Los Angeles Times - Washington Post News Service
MagPortal.com
MapQuest
Medal of Honor Citations
Mental Health Matters
Military Analysis Network
Military Search
MIT Radio Stations List
Moreover
MSNBC
My Virtual Reference Desk
Nando Times
NASA Kennedy Space Center
National Association of Newspapers
New York Times

New York Times Books
News Central
News Index
NYNY
ParkMaps.com
Pathfinder
PBS NewsHour Online
People Magazine
PhysLINK
Plants
Profusion

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RefDesk
Research It
Research Paper
San Jose Mercury News
SciCentral
Science
Science Net
Sports Illustrated
Television News Archive (Vanderbilt University)
The 50 States of the United States
The Aviation Zone
The Commonwealth Yearbook
The Costume Gallery's Research Library
The Electronic Library
The Elements of Style, William Strunk
The Encyclopedia Mythica
The Farmer's Almanac
The Galileo Project
The Hollywood Reporter
The Human-Languages Page
The Intellectual Property Network

The Internet Public Library
The Literary Dictionary
The MoJo Wire
The Nobel Channel
The Nobel Prize Internet Archive
The On-Line Books Page
The Phobia List
The Pulitzer Prizes
The Village Voice
The World Travel Search Engine
The Backpacker
Thomas Registry of Manufacturers
Time Magazine
Travel.org
Tutorialfind
U.S. News Online
US Military Aviation
USA Today
Variety
Virginia University Hypertexts
Wall Street Journal
War, Peace and Security Guide
Weather.com
WeatherNet
Webgator
Webtender
Whatis.com
WISDOM: Knowledge & Literature Search
Witchcraft In Salem Village
Wunderground (Weather Underground)

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Search Engines, Directories, Link Resources

Note: Major search sites and up and coming sites are in bold text.

100Hot
123 Kidz Area
1Blink
1st Search
1st Spot
250000
2b
2Look4It
2Trom.com
3 Apes
411Locate
4anything
4SmallBusiness
555-1212.com
7MetaSearch.com
A to Z
AAA Matilda
About.com
Accomodation.com
AccuFind
Acoon Search Engine
Across Ontario Search
Acts Christian Search
AdvisorPage
Aeiwi
AfterPage
Ah-Ha
AlcanSeek
Alingo
All Business
All Newspapers.com
All The Web

All4One
Allestra
AllSearchEngines.com
Alta Vista
Altavista UK
Altrasearch
American Net.com
Andaloucia Search Engine List Page
ANZAK Search
Anzwers
AOL Net Find
AOL Search
AOL Search Kids Only
AppleLinks
Arabist
Arc
Argus Clearinghouse
AriadneSpider
Asiaco
Ask Jeeves for Kids
Ask Jeeves!
AskAlex
AtomicMoon.com
Aussie.com
Australian WWW Servers
AvatarSearch
Awesome Library

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Baby Oil
Beamed Search
Beaucoup
Best Of The Web
Big Bang

Big What
BigBook
Bigfoot
BigHub.com
BioExplorer Bioscience Links
Biomed Net
Biz Shoppe
BizCardz
BizExpose
BizMarx.com
BlackSeek
BlindMouse.com
Bob's Good Stuff Lists
Bomis.com
Boomerang
Boomerank
BostonShopper.com
Bot1
Britannica Internet Guide
British Web Design & Marketing Association
BuildNet
Business Metro
Busweb
BWDMA UK
ByteSearch
Canada.com Search
CanadaOne's list of Canadian Indexes
CanadaSeek
CanadaSpace.com
Canadian, Eh?
Canadopedia
CannyLink Internet Guide
Carrefour
Castings (foundry) Directory

CDnet
Celluloid Links
Celtic Attic
CharityUSA
Charming Country Inns
CheckHouston.com
Christianity.net
Click and Search
Clickey
Codino.com
Collectiques
Comedy Zone
Comoestamos.com
Complete Planet
CompuInfo Center
Conni2000
Constellation
Contest World
Contractor Guide
Cool Seek
Cowley Findit!
Cozy Cabin
CrashInto.com
CrossCanada Search
CrossLinkz
Curiosity Online
Curry Guide UK
Cyber Jaya
Cyber411
CyberDirectory

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dataBot
Debriefing

Deeper Blue Search
Deja UseNet online
Dewa Network
DFW.com
Diabolos
Direct Hit
DirectFind
DirectionX Anime Search Engine
DirectoryGuide
Disinformation
Ditto Image Search
DiySearch
Dizzy Duck
Do-It-Yourself Search
Dogpile
DukerSearch
Elite Sites on the Net
EncyberPedia
English as a Second Language
English as a Second Language Links
Entire Web
Epluribiz
Esoteric Web Directory
EurNet Online
EuroRank
Euroseek
Everything Showbiz
ExactHit
Excite
Excite Australia
Excite UK
Eye On The Web
EZ Result
EzineSeek

Family Web Files
Fast Search
Fast_tracker
Fathead Search
Femina
Festive World
Fetch Dog
Final Search
Find-a-Church
FinderSeeker
FindLaw
FindOnce
FindQuik.Com search Center
FindURL
FindWhat.com
Fishoo
Flash Search
ForceWeb.net
Four 11
Free Center
Free Searching Reference Guide
Freealty Internet Search
FreeSites
FreezerSearch
Frequent Finders
Fresh Links
Frodo.com
Fubbles
Fun Sites
Funky Cat
Fuzzy Crawler

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G.O.D. (Global Online Directory)
Galaxy
Gallery Sites
Galore
Gambler's Quarters
Gasta
GCN
Gee-Wiz!
GeneralSearch
Gettos
Global Jam Search
Go Eureka
GO.com
goHip
Golfers Index
Google
Google Image Search
Google Newsgroups Search
Googley Search
Goshen.net
GoTo
GotoGeo
Gotta Bounce.com
Great Info.com
GreenSites
Grizzly Web Links
Grogom Search Engine
GTE Yellow Pages
Halleluia! - Churches
Handi Links World Internet Directory
HealthLinks
Hieros Gamos
Highforce International Search
Highway 61

Hit-Net
HitBox
Hot Index
HotBot
HotRate
I-Find
iBound
IdeaWeb
in1
Indecka
Independant Insurance Agent's Directory
Indiana University School of Law: Law Virtual Library
IndustrySearch
Inference Find
InfiniSearch
Infinite Horizon Internet Directory
InfoApex
Infobase-Intl.com
Infogrid Master Internet Index
Infohiway
Infolinks
Infomak.com
InfoMarket
Infomine
InfoProbe
InfoSpace
InfoTiger
Infozoid
Inktomi
InnWeb
InteriorDesigner.com
Internet Book
Internet Legal Resource Guide
Internet Press

Internet Underground
InterYourNet.com
IPROM
ISeekInfo
Iwon
Ixquick

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Jayde
Jazzy
jBlue Search Engine
JobHopper - Help Wanted Listings
JoeAnt.com
Josh's Sanctum
Jump City
K's Search Net
KaaZoo
Kanoodle
Kazam.com
KeConnect Internet
Kentucky.com
Killer Info Web Site Index
Kinetics
Koolsurf International Directory
Kresch.com WWW Meta Search
Land of Links
LemmeCheck
Library Spot
LifeStyle UK
Lightning Search
Link Grinder
Link Locate
Link Monster
Linkavista

LinkCentre
Linkease
LinkMania
Linkmaster
Links2Go
LinkSpinnerNetwork
Lionpages Search Engine
Little Finder
Logistics Bay
Lookoff
Looksmart
LookSmart Australia
LookSmart UK
LookTheWeb
Lots of Hits.com
LuxPoint
Lycos
Lycos FTP Search
Lycos' Picture This

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Macinstein
MadCrazy
Magellan
Magic Woman Petticoat Directory
MajorClick
Mamma.com
Maple Square
Master Site
Master-World.com
Matilda
Mature Connections
Maxisearch
Medical World Search

MegaSpider
MegaWeb
Merchant Court Commercial Site Resources
MetaBug Internet Search
MetaCrawler
MetaGopher
Michigan Merchant
MidSeek
Mike's Web Site
Mirago
Mishpat Legal Index
MixCat
Mochanni
Monkey Link
MonkeySeek
MonsterCrawler
Moshix2.net
MSN Search Index
Mugomilk Ukie
MultiMeta
MultiSoft Italian Search Engine
MusicSearch
My Page
myGO
MyPiranha.com
National Directory
Native American Resources
Nautila
NBCi (formerly Snap)
Need2Search
NeoBolt
Nerd World
Net Artic
Net Breach

Net Buster
Net Crawler
Net Guide
Net Listed
Net Quantum
Net Search
Net Searcher
Net Surprise.com
Net Windows
Net Words
Net-Worx Search
Net1.com
Netministries.org
NetPond
Netpower
Netscape Search
NetSurprise
New Age Web Works
New Jersey Webguide
New Web Stuff
Nihongo Yellow Pages
Northern Light
NSW Search
Nytesearch

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OmniSeek
Omnitree
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One Mission.com
OneGenesis

OneMission
OneSearch
Oozap
Open Directory Project
Open Here
Oz Engine
OZSearch
Pandia Search Central
Patron World Site
Peach Pod
PedagoNet
Peekaboo
Pegasus
Peng's.com
Pepe Search
PerformingArts.net
Personal Heritage
Phat Links
Phatoz
Phone-Soft CyberWorld International
Pick Your Subject.com
Pinakasuyaling Search
Planet Search
PlanetClick
Point Guide
Poke!
PortalSeek
PortalUno
PowerOfAttorney.com
PowerSearch
Prime Find
Prime Medical
Prime Search
Primeseek

Profind
ProFusion
Qango
QualitySearch
QuestFinder
Quincy Web
Radical Crawler
Rapid Live Links
Rausco
RDL National
Re:Quest dot net
Ready Reference
Real World Holidays
Red Ozone.com
Rescue Island
REsoftlinks
ResourcePage.com
Retif's Art Index
Rex
RightBot
Ring World
Riot
Roadhouse
RockSource
Roomz
Rural America Jobfind
Ruzivo

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SA Seek
Safe Searching
Safe Web
Saluki Search
Scandal Search

Scato
Scoot
Scour.net Multimedia & Graphics
Scrub The Web
Search Beat
Search Black
Search City
Search Devil
Search e-Books
Search Engine Colossus
Search Fool
Search Goat
Search Idea
Search King
Search Look
Search Maniac
Search Mode
Search O'Mega
Search Power!
Search Process Information Search
Search Spaniel
Search Spot Open Directory
Search Tycoon
Search UK
Search Up
Search-Nevada.com
Search.com
Search4Info.com
SearchAt! Search Engine
SearchBC
SearchGate
SearchHippo
SearchHound
SearchIt

SearchIt UK
Searchlite
SearchLynx
Searchopolis
Searchport
SearchQuest
SearchTheWeb
Seek Sites.Com
SelectSurf
SeniorHospitality
Shadows Link Directory
SheKnows - Online Resources & Info for Women
Simpli.com
SiteProductions
Sites2Surf
SiteShack
SmartGuides
Soprano Connections
Spartacus Directory
Speed of Mind
Spidera.org
Spiderbot
SpiritSearch
Spitfire!
Splat
Splut
Starting Point
StoneHoo
Stop@
Study Web
Subjex
Suite 101.com
Sun Brain
Sun Search

Sun Stream Search
Super Snooper
Supercrawler
SuperCyberSearch
SuperPages (Yellow Pages)
SuperPro
Superseek
SuperSnooper
Support & Recovery Yellow Pages
Sure Stream
Surf Central
Surf Gopher
Surf Point
SurfLondon
Switchboard

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Tagapaghanap
TalentedKids.com
TeachWeb
Tek-Town Train
Teoma Search
The Argus Clearinghouse
The Mark
The Net 1
The Order Linking Library
The Real Estate Library
The Reel Site Directory
TheInfo
Theme Stream
TherapyCity
Thunderstone
TOL Search
Top 10 Links

Topsearch
Total Seek
TownNet
Travel Channels
True Search.Com
Try America
Turco Crawler
Turnpike Emporium Directory
Tyzo Travel Search
Uffda!
UK Index
UK Plus
UKMax
UKPlanet
Uni-Search
URL Book
USA Online (search states)
Use It!
Verita Directory
Vic Find
Village Links
Vipros
Virgilio Directory
Virtuocity
VR9
vSearch

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W-6 Net
W8 Search
Wazoo
WDirect.com
Web Links: One Stop - Many Exits
Web Quartet

Web Search
Web Search 2k
Web Seek Image and Video Search
Web Trawler
Web Wombat
Webbie World
WebCanada
WebCity Canada
WebCrawler
WebLinkPlaza
WebOctopus
Webquest
WebScout
WebSection
WebsMostLinked
WebStack
WebSurfer
WebTop Search
WebZone
WeCareToo
What-U-Seek
Whats New Too
Where2Go
White Hot Search Engine
Who's Best
WholeWorld
Whowhere (Lycos)
WhoWhere?
WiccaNet
Wise Nut
WithOneClick
World Light
World Search Center
World Wide Travel Source

WorldVoter
WWWHunter
WWWoman
WWWRiot
Yahoo
Yahooligans
Yazooh
Yellow.ca
Yep.com
YourFamily.com
Yusearch.com
Z Search
Zeal
Zenzibar Alternative Culture
Zerx Web Guide
ZippyFinder

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Search Engine Submission Software and Resources

Reminder: Don't use submission software for the major search engines. Most won't list your site, some will penalize your site, and some may ban your site! Just use it for all the little oddballs. I also offer a submission service, but to be honest, you're better off in the long run in buying the software I use rather than paying a one time fee to me.

AddWeb
AutoSubmit
Boogie Jack's Submission Service :my service
Champion Launcher
Dynamic Submission 2000
Exploit Submission Wizard
Free AddaUrl
Sharp Spider

Submission Wizard
Submit Wolf Pro
Traffic Seeker
Web Position Gold :this is supposed to be the best of the bunch.

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Shopping Carts Note: Prices range from free to over $40,000!

1st Avenue Market
ActiveShop
AHG Shopping Cart
Alphalogic Systems
APS Technology
Breakthrough Software
Bullnet
Capris
ClickShop
Dallas Bowman Media Group
Daytona Cart Co.
Domino Merchant
Dydacomp
E-Commerce Services
E-CommerceSpace
Eshops
Estoremanager.com
Ewindowshop
EZShopper
Final Host Shopping Cart Solutions
Free MiniVend
Free PerlShop
Free Web Store
Globus Electronic Store
Goldpaint
Hassan Consulting's Shopping Cart

Hazel
Hostmaster 2000
IBIS Business Internet Solutions, Inc.
iCat Electronic Commerce Publisher
iCat Electronic Commerce Suite
IMSure Network, Inc.
INEX Commerce Court Pro
Intershop Mall
Intershop Online
JShop Professional
KC Websites
Make-A-Store
Merchandizer
Merchant Builder
Net.Commerce
Net2Go
Periplus Quest
Real Soft Shopping Cart
Rich Media Technologies
SecureSiteCommerce.ComPany
Shopping Cart Services
Shopping Cart Software
ShopSite Manager
ShopSite Pro
Shopthings
ShopZone
Smart Shop
SoftCart
Speedware
StoreFront98
Themeware Corp
Verifone
Vision Factory/
WebCart

Webcart E-Commerce
WebCatalog & WebMerchant
WebEcom.net
WebGenie
WebSiteOrder

Back up to the Menu

U.S. Government Sites (not all are official .gov sites)

Better Business Bureau
Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress
CIA (Central Intelligence Agency)
CIA Factbook 2000
Congressional Email Directory
DefenseLINK
FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation)
Federal Chief Information Officers Council
Federal Consumer Information Center
Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service
FedStats
FedWorld Information Network
FirstGov
Government Information Locator Service
Immigration and Naturalization Service
Internal Revenue Service
Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS)
NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)
National Bioethics Advisory Commission
National First Ladies Library
National Mediation Board
Office of National AIDS Policy
Office of Personnel Management
Office of Special Counsel
Retirement Programs

State and Local Government on the Net
The Embassy Web
The Federal Web Locator
U.S. Census
U.S. House Of Representatives
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
U.S. Senate Home Page
United States Copyright Office
United States Information Service
White House

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U.S. State Sites

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland

Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virgina
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

Writing Related Links

2000 Golden Quill Contest of the Desert Rose
4 Writers

A Tool Kit of Links and Documents for Collection Development and
Management Librarians
Absolute Write
Accurate Writing and More
Affaire de Coeur Magazine
American West Ezine
Anotherrealm
Arizona Authors Association :free alerts for businesses that promise pay, but
don't pay up!
ArtslynxInternational Writing Resources
AssociatedWriting Programs
Association of American Publishers
AuthorsDen
AuthorsGuild Online
Autoresponders
Barnes and Noble Rocket Edition Store
Baryon Magazine
Bella-Online Electronic Publications
Black Arts Literature
Black Women's Literary Forum
Book Signing Tips
Bookaholics.com
Bookbug on the Web
BookIdea.com
BookIdea.com - How to Conduct TelephoneInterviews
BookMarketing Update
BookPage
Books A to Z
Books From the Heart
Boulder Writers Alliance
Bridges Romance Magazine
Brown & Dutch
CheapPublicity.com
CopyEditor

Crescent Blues E'Magazine
Critters Workshop
CyberRead
Dark Tales Publications
Dead Celebrities (Mystery)
E-bookMarketing Secrets
Ebook Advisor
eBook Connections
eBook Directory
Ebook Insider
Ebook Readers Review Board
eBookAd
Ebooks Rock!
eBookWeb
Eclectics.com
eGroups: writerlist
Electronic Book Club
EPIC: Electronically Published Internet Connection
EPPIE AWARD for Excellence
Escape to Romance
Event Horizons (SF)

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Fiction Forest
FiveStar Publications, Inc.
ForWriters.com
Frankfurt eBook Award
Free Word-of-Mouth Marketing Tips
FrugalFun.com
Funds for Writers
Galaxy Library
Garbl's Writing Resources Online
Gemini Bookstore
GenrEZONE

GoldbarEnterprises
Grammar Lady Online
Guerilla
Heartland RWA
Heartland Writers Guild
Historical Mystery Appreciation Society
HOLT Medallion - Virginia Romance Writers
Horror Writers Association
Independent Publisher
Inkspot
Inscriptions Magazine
International Horror Writer's Guild Awards
International Women's Writing Guild
Internet Press Guild
Ivy Quill
Jackhammer Ezine
January Magazine
Just Views
JustViews
Knowbetter.com
Lambda Sci-Fi
Links to Newspapers All Over the World
Literary Marketplace
LiteraryAgent.com
Locus Online
Manuscript Editing
Marketing Resources InfoCentre
Mary Wolf's Guide to Electronic Publishers
MarylandWriters' Association
McQuark Reviews
MG Supersite '99: Book Worlds
Midnight Scribe
Midwest Book Review
Millennium Science Fiction and Fantasy Magazine

Multicultural Marketing Resources, Inc.
Murder List
Mystery Pages.com< br>Mystery and Suspense Chapter's Kiss of Death Awards
Mystery Readers Journal
Mystery Writers of America
Mystery Writers of America
Mystic-Ink

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National League of American Pen Women
National Writers Union
National WritersUnion
NationalAssociation of Black Journalists
NetLibrary
NETrageous
New and Used Books Reader to Reader Column
NoNA (Notable New Author)
NovelAdvice
Novelists, Inc
Oklahoma Writers' Federation, Inc.
Online English Grammar
PacificNorthwest Writers Association
Page One
Page ONE Literary Newsletter
Painted Rock Writers and Readers Colony
ParaPublishing
Pathway to Darkness (Vampire Stories)Peanut Press
Phantastes (Fantasy)
Piers Anthony's Newsletter & Ogre's Den & Internet Publishing Survey
PoetrySociety of America
Poets & WritersOnline
PoliceWriters Club
Powell's
Preditors and Editors

PRISM Award
PublishersMarketing Association
QueryLetters.com
Raven's Reviews
Readers Weekly
Rhapsody Magazine
RKedit
Romance Book Recommendations
Romance Communications
Romance Industry News
Romance Novel Reviews
Romance Novels & Women's Fiction
RomanceWriters of America
Romantic Times Magazine
San FranciscoBay Area Writers' Groups
Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America
Science Fiction Romance
Scribblers eBookShoppe
Scribe andQuill
Scribe Consulting
Scribes World Reviews
SF & Fantasy Net
SF Site: Home Page for Science Fiction & Fantasy
Sharpwriter
Shaw Guides to Writers Conferences
Sime-Gen
Sisters in Crime
Society forTechnical Communication
Society ofAmerican Travel Writers
Societyof American Business Editors and Writers
Softbook
SouthAsian Journalists Association
SouthwestWriters

Subterranean Press (Horror)
Subversion

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TeleRead: Bring the E-Books Home
Text and Academic Authors
The American Crime Writers League
The Aspen Gold
The AuthorsGuild
The Barclary Gold for Published Authors
The Belles and Beaux of Romance
The Goblin Muse
The Huntress's Book Reviews
The Netter - Free Marketing and Promotion
The Paper Tiger
The Rock
The Romance Club
The Romantic Bower
The Running River Reader
The Sapphire Award (SF Romance)
The Slot
The Ultimate Romancebook Website
The Ultimate Science Fiction Web Guide
The Word Museum
The World of Writing
The Write Touch Reader's Awards
The Writers Club
TheAcademy of American Poets
TheInternet Writing Journal
TheNetter
Total E-Books Directory
Tracy's Book Reviews
Travel Writer's Marketplace
Under the Covers Book Reviews

US Times Bestseller List & Review
WebGrammar
Weblications.Net
Western Writers of America
Western Writers of America
Women Writing the West
Women Writing the West Willa Cather Literary Award
Women's Studies Links of Interest
Word Weaving
Wordsmith's WebBook
WordsWorth Communications
World Romance Writers
Write Touch
Write4kidsv
Writer's Center - Maryland's Literary Resource Center
Writer's Hood
Writer's Way
Writer's Write
Writer's Digest Writers Free Reverence
Writers Guild ofAmerica
Writers Hood
Writers International Network
Writers Journal
Writers.com
WritingClasses.com
WyomingWriters, Inc.
Xlibris
Young Writers Club

Whew! Pretty impressive, huh!

Go Back and Hear the Thunder