# How to Make

MONEY ONLINE

Learn how to make money on the internet!

How To Make Money Online

How To Make Money Online

Title: How To Make Money Online
Copyright © 2019 eMarketing Institute

Web: https://www.emarketinginstitute.org/

Contact us
eMarketing Institute
c/o Web Media ApS
Virumvej 70A
DK-2830 Virum, Greater Copenhagen
Denmark
VAT ID: DK 3531871301
Email: support@emarketinginstitute.org

Table of contents

1

Introduction

1. Introduction

A couple of years ago, if you had told someone that you were working online, they would probably just nod and think "What a waste of time! Can't find a real job, yeah?". As freelancing and blogging were starting off, people who actually jumped this wagon early on were perceived as lazy, gullible and maybe even fools to think this will turn into something viable. Those are now people who own thousands and thousands of dollars worth of businesses and brands.

Today, when you say you are working online, people usually say "Oh, wow, good for you". They are probably envious a bit as you must be making a ton of money sitting home and doing "nothing".

Yes, there are so many opinions about making money online, but if you are interested in exploring how you can become one of those lucky ones, this ebook will introduce you to multiple ways you can actually start making money on the internet.

https://unsplash.com/photos/W7K3LJHcsu8

First things first. You need to realize that there are numerous ways to earn money. Not all of them are going to be the right fit for you. Nor will you like all of them. Also, the expected income can be quite diverse depending on the type of work you do and depending on how good you are at it.

Skills needed to work online

As you will see throughout this ebook, there are some specific skills to learn if you want to work online. Depending on the industry you might need to learn about online marketing, real estate, web administration, etc. While these can be different and quite industry-related, there are some universal skills you need to have to be able to succeed online. Those include:

Organization

Most of the time, when you work online your job will be quite flexible. You will usually have a deadline for some tasks and sometimes you might be required to have specific working hours. However, in many cases how you organize your working day is completely up to you. You might work every day for three to four hours. You might prefer working 10 hours a day, and then taking a day or two off. Also, you can work during the night if you prefer that. You can work from home, from the beach, from an office, etc.

Although this flexibility is quite tempting, and actually one of the most common reasons why people see working online as such a "dream job", this comes with a big responsibility. You will need to organize your working hours and you will be responsible for meeting deadlines.

If you are a kind of person who procrastinates a lot and always does things last minute, you might find working from home stressful. The main problem will be your inability to organize your tasks and create a sort of plan for each working day.

To avoid getting this in the way of a promising career, you can do the following:

- Create a monthly/weekly planner
- Create daily to-do lists
- Use reminders
- Hire an assistant who can organize your time and basically tell you what and when you need to do

Essentially, you will need to manage your time, your projects and your activities, which all require good organization, paying attention to the details and being able to successfully meet the deadlines.

Communication

Most of the communication in such a career is done in a written form. Sometimes you might never meet people you are working with, you will never know their voice, the way they talk, etc. This means that the nonverbal aspect of communication is missing and this can significantly affect your conversations. You will not be able to rely on body language to deduct the meaning of certain expressions, nor will you have that "reading between the lines" moment when you are reading an email.

Another factor that has a significant influence on communication is language. A great part of communication online is done in English. People write blog posts, share status updates on social media, and send emails in English. However, a considerable portion of those are not native speakers. This can sometimes create obstacles in communication.

Firstly, a client might misunderstand you if you use too complex sentences without realizing the client is actually a beginner level in English. People who speak English as a second language come from different cultures, so the way they use the language is also different. While using the verb should for giving advice is ok in some countries, some cultures might find it too formal and kind of intrusive. Native speakers see the difference between saying *"Could you finish the report by next Monday, please?"*, and *"Can you finish the report by Monday?"* while non-native speakers might not.

You need to understand that communication will make up a massive part of your work. You will have to organize meetings, to discuss the terms of contracts, to negotiate the salary, etc. This means that you need to know the language enough to do so.

Here are some general tips for good communication:

- Greet the recipient in the beginning
- Use modal verbs (could, might, would) to sound more polite
- Don't be afraid to say please
- Write in the language the recipient will understand
- Use emoticons to replace the nonverbal communication (emoticons are now widely used and acceptable in business correspondence)

- End the message with a positive attitude

Resourcefulness

Resourcefulness, i.e. the ability to find quick and clever ways to overcome difficulties, is one of the most important skills to have when working online. In essence, it refers to your ability to find a solution or an answer when you do not know something.

For most of the jobs you will discover in this ebook, there are no official degrees, or they are just starting out to be introduced. Even if you do have relevant knowledge, the internet world changes so fast, that you will soon find out that some things are becoming obsolete.

Also, you cannot know everything. There is no need to store a bunch of (ir)relevant information in your mind. Being a walking encyclopedia was something that was respected in the past and knowledgeable people were quite appreciated. Today, there is a different attitude. What is appreciated is being able to find the information you need quickly and easily. Being able to solve the problem on the spot.

One day, you might be in a situation where a client asks you to adjust an effect in the photo using Photoshop software, and you do not have to be an experienced designer to take up this task. You might have never done this kind of task and that is also perfectly fine. As long as you can find out how to do it. You will search the internet, find relevant tutorials and learn to do this. You will not even bother your client with details of how you did that. You will do the task. That is the thinking process of a resourceful person.

Availability

Working online requires you to be available quite often and responsive to messages. You cannot be one of those people who check their email once a week. As someone who works online, you will need to adopt the internet and the technology to be your daily scenery.

The potential issue that might occur, but one which is necessary to mention, is to become so involved in your online work that you allow this to affect your daily life. The internet work is constantly around you. You can never go home after work and relax because your work is always with you. Just look at your phone, and you will find something you need to "check" or "monitor". One day, you might be walking down the street and unconsciously start staring at your phone, checking emails, without paying attention that you might run into something.

This is something that happens to a lot of people working online. It is something that people who do not work online cannot relate to. It simply creeps up and quickly consumes your attention in

ways that are not healthy. Again, a good organization can help you with fighting this as well as these tips:

- Rent an office or have a separate room in the house where you work (then you can leave your work there)
- Determine office hours and do not check your emails outside of those unless you expect something urgent and time-sensitive
- Find a convenient time to occasionally take a vacation, even for three or four days (but really do this, no phones, no computer, just enjoy the real world and have a sort of an internet detox)

Benefits of working online

While working online does require specific skills, it is not for everyone and there are reasons why this might not be as dreamy job as one might think.

https://www.pexels.com/photo/person-using-macbook-pro-955448/

Still, there are a lot of benefits of working online and here are some:

Flexibility - Organizing your own time gives you more control in terms of when you work. For example, you do not have to miss your child's school play because you can work after that.

Lifelong learning - Keeping your brain active is a good exercise to keep your entire body healthy. When you work online, you will need to constantly learn new things, explore new practices, etc.

Unlimited income - Don't get carried away just yet and expect six-figure income in a few months, but working online is quite flexible in terms of making money. It depends on the type of work you do, how much you work each month, etc. While this is a good thing, as you are not limited by a monthly salary, you must be careful with money management, as there will be months when the income is low.

Less stress - Many people who work online love the ability to create their own working environment which is much less stressful for them.

No commuting - Ok, this one is a big plus, regardless how you make money online. There will be no more waiting for the train, hoping it does not rain on your way home, etc. You will avoid traffic, and you will also save money you would spend on gas or tickets.

Higher productivity - Standard jobs have specific working hours (it is usually 8 hours) but people rarely spend all those hours actually working. A lot of those time is spent on breaks, casual chatting with colleagues, etc. This is why when you work online, you are more likely to finish the job in much less time, thus increasing your productivity level by far.

As you can see, there are a lot of things to think about when choosing this kind of a career. Hopefully, by the time you finish reading this ebook, you will discover if this is the career to pursue and which of these jobs would be a real dream come true for you.

2

How To Make Money Online

2. How To Make Money Online

When you hear that phrase "making money online" a number of positive association come to your mind. It is the kind of activity which is associated with endless possibilities to earn income, to work in a comfort of your home (or a beach resort for example) and it enables equal opportunities to everyone.

Throughout this ebook, you will learn multiple ways you can earn money online. Some of those will require a specific knowledge which you either have, or you will need to acquire. Some methods of making money online require an investment, while some can be achieved with almost no money upfront at all. This is why the possibilities are pretty vast and why this career is not something that is limited to a specific group of people.

But before we continue with the practical examples of making money, you will need to prepare some grounds for your work.

Payment method

This section refers to the process of receiving payments from your online activities. It firstly depends on what you are going to do. For example, if you are working through a specific platform (such as selling on eBay), they usually handle payments for you. On the other hand, if you are going to sell products directly from your online store, you will need software to process and accept payments.

So the basic division is this one:

Not handling payments

In this case, you work with a specific company that handles the payment. It is an easier option and you do not need any help or prior experience with online payments. The main drawback is that each platform that does this for you will take a percentage of your revenue. In most cases, even with sharing the revenue, not having to deal with the payments is much more cost effective for those interested in earning money online. It is a recommended option for beginners and those with limited income opportunities.

Using this option means that you will need some kind of an account where you will simply transfer the payments. PayPal is commonly used for this purpose. Alternatives are credit cards that support online transactions. Either way, make sure you have these prepared so you can transfer money once you earn it.

Handling payments yourself

With this option, the main advantage is that you collect the entire revenue. While there is no revenue sharing, there are costs associated with using this option for online payment. For example, if you start an online store, you will need to integrate a shopping cart and payment gateway, both of which are paid extensions to the platform. Some require one-time payment, while other companies offer subscription-based services. In both cases, it is an expense you need to have in mind when choosing how you will handle payments.

Besides this expense, you will also need experience with handling payments, refunds and the whole system management. If you do not have enough experience to do so (or time), you will need to hire someone who will do this for you.

Registering a business

Next step is defining your activity and how you will handle your legal status. Not all of the activities you will see here require registering a business. Nor is the process the same in all of the countries.

This is something you will need to handle on your local level. Talk to a lawyer or an accountant, and explore the local laws. You will need to find out what you can and cannot do, what kind of payments can be accepted, if there are countries you cannot do business with, etc.

You will need this sort of a background preparation and research to know how to keep your online activities within the legal frame. This way you make sure you will avoid any problems and ensure you can continue working online for as long as you want.

Long-term goals

Try to think about where you see yourself in a couple of months, and even a couple of years. Even if you are only starting out and have no prior experience, try to imagine where you want your online career to take you.

Why is this important?

Well, regardless if making money online is going to become your full-time job or it will still be a side job you do from time to time while still holding on to your regular job, you will need to plan how you will organize everything, which opportunities you will accept, which ones you will pass, and how much you will devote to this. It will enable you to determine if you will do everything on your own, if you are going to hire someone to help you. Finally, it will influence whether you will work through a specific platform or you will set up everything independently.

These are all the grounds that will help you work online. You need this background to keep your efforts organized and focused on achieving your goal.

3

Sell Online

3. Sell Online

The first activity that you can do to make money online is to start selling. In a sense, it is the easiest activity to start with zero investment and experience. Do you happen to have an Xbox you are not using or a T-shirt you have outgrown? Maybe it is time to get rid of the clutter you have been collecting all these years and maybe earn some money along the way.

There are a lot of things and a lot of ways to sell online. Having your own webshop is the topic we will be focusing on in the next chapter, and in this one, we will see other ways and platforms to sell online.

https://unsplash.com/photos/vLpO7F3iAyA

Online marketplaces

Firstly, you will need to learn about online marketplaces and what those are. In a nutshell, those are websites that enable you to register as a seller and start selling your products. Some of the most popular marketplaces are:

- [eBay](#)

- [Amazon](#)

- [Etsy](#)

- [Bonanza](#)

- [Alibaba](#)

- [Jet](#)

The process of starting to sell through these services is the following:

- Register for an account - You will need to fill in an application form with the details the specific online marketplace requires, such as your personal data, information about the products you are going to sell, etc.

- Wait until your account is approved to start adding products

- Use the features the marketplace provides to present your products in the best way. This includes adding images, compelling description, product details, maybe even videos.

- Start promoting your products and accepting payments.

Products you sell

You can make money selling all sorts of products online. Ideally, you should focus on products that are somehow related to your interest, or you have experience using. But this does not have to be the rule. You can choose to sell anything you want. Familiarity with the product may seem like a benefit in the sense that you will be better at promoting such a product. But again, this does not have to be the rule.

Another good way to choose the product you will sell is to examine the supply and demand. This kind of market evaluation helps you find out products that are most likely to sell better than the rest.

Some ideas regarding the products you are going to sell.

Selling old stuff

Although you might make some money off selling old stuff, this is not particularly a perfect way to make money. You will usually sell things at a cheaper price than when you first bought them, except in cases when you sell inherited stuff, antiques, or maybe collector's items.

Besides the traditional sales, you could also opt for auction sale, which online marketplaces (such as eBay) support. In this case, you would set up a starting price, and set the time for buyers to suggest the price they would be willing to pay for your product. Depending on the type of product and the level of demand, you might end up getting quite a big selling price this way.

Selling your products

If you are crafty and able to make your own product, online marketplaces could be a good way to start. They are actually ideal for beginners who want to keep the expenses low and avoid the hustle of setting up a full-on online store. You can sell anything you make, regardless if that is handmade hair accessories, knitted hats and scarves, or wooden picture frames.

Reselling products

You could also sell products you did not make. In this case, you will be reselling. You will find the products you are interested in selling and then you will create product pages to promote them. The advantage is that you have an amazing product variety to choose from and you do not have to be involved in the production process. The main drawback is that your selling career will depend on certain manufacturers, who are in charge of product quality, buyers price, etc.

Selling your service

The internet enables you to sell all the different kinds of services. You can sell services online, such as offering online consulting sessions. On the other hand, you might just promote your services online while you do the work offline. For example, you could be a personal fitness trainer who promotes these services on your own website. Since the topic of this ebook is making money online, we will explore this virtual realm of offering services later on throughout this ebook, and you will see different kinds of services you can sell to earn money online.

Selling digital products

It is a perfect activity if you want to sell on a global level and reach millions and millions of users. This is the greatest benefit of selling online as opposed to selling locally - the possibility to reach much more people. Different kinds of digital products could be sold online, such as music, ebooks, worksheets, tutorials, etc.

Photos

Photography is an inseparable part of websites, blogs, online marketing campaigns, etc. which is why it is always an excellent option to explore, especially if you are looking for a passive income.

Ideally, you need to investigate the demand, detect what is missing and then create great photos. Of course, you will need some equipment for this, and perhaps some experience with editing photos. Alternatively, you could organize everything and then hire a photographer to do the creative part.
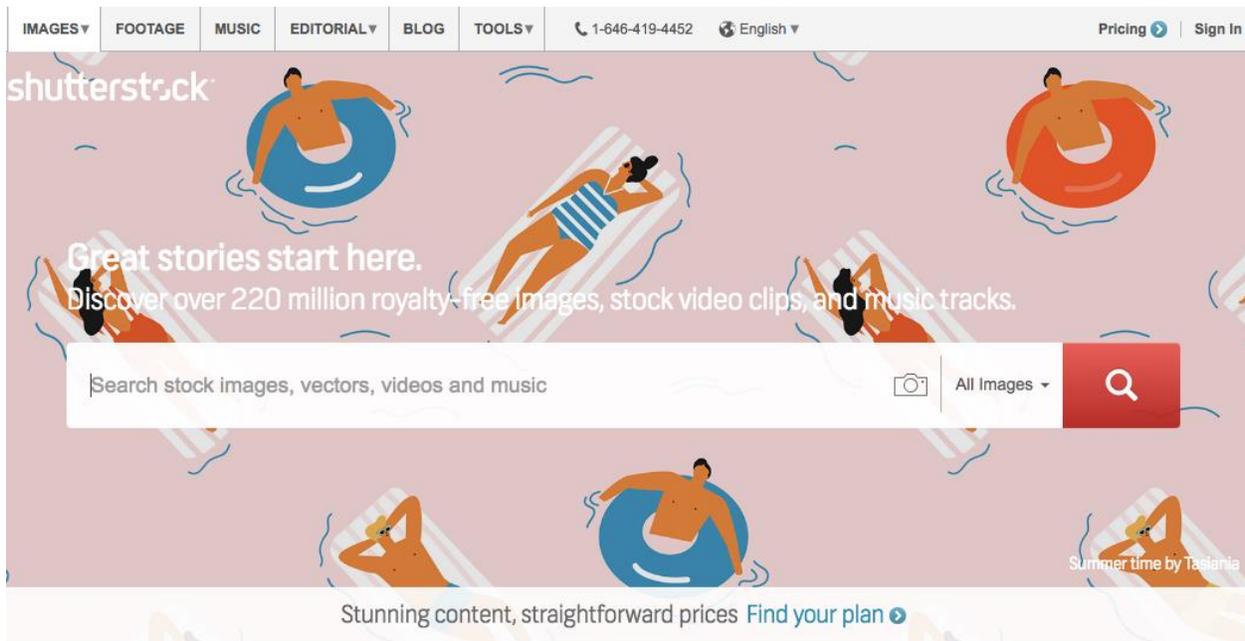
https://www.shutterstock.com/

The rest is quite simple. You add your photos to the websites that sell photos, and this is how you create passive income for yourself. You do not need to take care of the management and sales process, as the websites do that for you (for a certain fee). Also, websites that specialize in photography already have this reputation and a significant number of followers, so it is easier to reach customers this way, then to try to find customers on your own.

- Shutterstock - One of the most popular websites for stock photography, where photographers can earn between 20 and 30% of the sale.

- [iStockphoto](#) - It offers a possibility to earn 15% from each sale, as well as an opportunity to become an exclusive contributor who earns between 20 and 45%.
- [FreeDigitalPhotos](#) - So far it offers the highest percentage as much as 70% of the sales price.
- [Fotolia](#) - The website enables contributors to earn from 20% to over 60% of the sales price.
- [Alamy](#) - The profit is shared 50/50, so contributors earn 50%, with no specific requirements, regardless if you are a beginner or a pro.

Besides the percentage of the sale you get as a contributor, the other thing you should consider is the exclusivity clause. Some websites require you to accept that you will grant the right to sell the photos on their platform exclusively. This prevents you from selling your photos on multiple websites. Other things you need to consider include the payment method, regular payment intervals, etc. Hence the need to explore the features each platform provides and go through the terms of use before becoming a contributor on any of those.

Ebooks

Ebooks are a great way for talented writers to get their work published and make some profit along the way, without the need to go through the publishing house. This way, they will have more freedom in the way they express themselves. Also, they will be able to offer the ebook to the international audience.

First, you will need to create an ebook. It can be on any topic you find relevant, interesting, or missing on the market. You can write it yourself, or you can hire a ghostwriter to do that for you. You will then need to format and proofread the ebook, as well as to create a book cover.
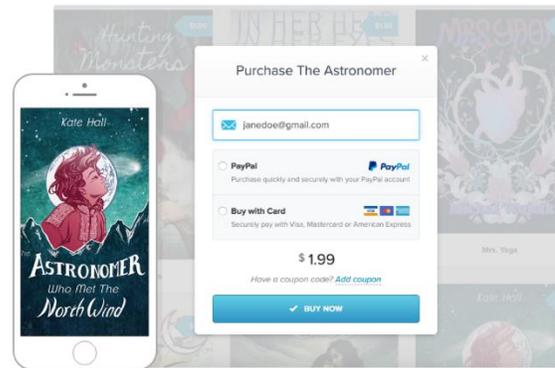
While your own website or blog should be the first place where you will be selling your ebook, other platforms enable you to do this, sometimes even more smoothly.

- Amazon - As the largest online store, Amazon is certainly a desirable place to sell your ebooks, as you get access to their massive, international audience. The company takes approximately 30% of each sale.

- Payhip - The platform offers various types of digital materials, including ebooks, and the charge of up to 5% is needed per transaction. The service enables you to create your landing page, share buttons, coupons, affiliate programs, etc.

- Blurb - Although it offers tools for creating and editing ebooks, Blurb allows several options to sell your ebook, regardless if you choose to do that through their platform, or Amazon, Apple's iBooks store, etc.

- E-junkie - Here is another online service to host and sell your ebooks with an option to create sales pages, discounts, packages, etc.

- Smashwords - The platform enables you to publish your ebook on their platform and/or distribute it through their partners. You get to keep 80% of the fee from your

sales through Smashwords, and 60% of your sales conducted through other distributors.

Music

Music is also a digital product you can sell online. Much like photography and ebooks, it can be a source of passive income. You will need to invest time in creating music and making it available online. For the process, you will be using particular instruments, software, etc. all of which you probably have if you are already a musician. Certain parts of the creation process (or all of it) can be outsourced to other musicians or studios.

https://www.dittomusic.com/

Once your masterpiece is done, all that is left is to release your music, and you can do so using some of these services:

- Ditto Music - The company offers you to release and sell music, while collecting 100% of your earnings. It distributes your music for you to major music online stores, such as iTunes, Amazon, etc.

- CD Baby - This global music distributor shares your music in more than 100 digital stores and streaming platforms.

- [TuneCore](#) - Another music distributor who will help you share your music globally while providing you with sales data to help you understand and evaluate the potential of your product.

Have in mind that big music stores and streaming services such as Amazon, iTunes, GooglePlay, Spotify, etc. do not directly work with independent musicians. This means that you would not be able to publish your music this way, but instead, you need to work with music distribution companies that will be able to distribute your music for you on those global services. Most of them allow you to keep 100% of your revenue, but they do require payment for using their services.

Other digital downloads

While these three types of digital products are probably the most popular ones, there are more digital downloads you can create and share with the world. Other digital downloads include:

- PDFs
- Worksheets
- Audiobooks
- Podcasts
- Tutorials (written, audio/video)

https://www.fetchapp.com/

Anything really that you can create, make available online and allow people to buy, can be used as a digital product. Here are some popular marketplaces enabling you to sell, even if you do not have your website.

- [Teachers Pay Teachers](#) - An online marketplace that enables you to sell your origin educational materials related to any subject, such as math, science, languages, etc.

- [Simple Good](#) - The platform allows embedding a checkout on your website or creating a checkout page so you can sell even without having your own website.

- [PulleyApp](#) - It is the service that allows you to create "Buy Now" button and embed it to your website, email, social networks, basically anywhere you want to reach your audience.

- [FetchApp](#) - A solution for you to sell different kinds of digital products on your website, blog, social networks or e-commerce platform.

- [Gumroad](#) - This is an all-in-one solution to sell digital products, with pre-orders, coupons codes, multiple product formats, etc.

The final recommendation is to always weight in both the pros and cons of selling through marketplaces. In general, beginners are usually better off using this method, because it is easier, more convenient, and it requires less work related to management, organization and processing sales. Of course, this comes with a required fee or percentage of revenue each company takes.

If you have these kinds of products, but you want to conduct sales yourself, then go to the next chapter, where you will get a quick guide on starting your online store.

4

Start a Webshop

4. Start a Webshop

So, you have checked out the marketplaces, but you still prefer having your own webshop. Then the topic of e-commerce is something you need to explore, and this section of the ebook will be a perfect start.

First of all, having a webshop requires more work than selling through marketplaces and similar services. At the same time, it offers much more flexibility, a possibility for growing and expanding your business.

https://unsplash.com/photos/W1B2LpQOBxA

Set up the website

The first thing you will need is a website or blog which will be linked to your webshop. To create a website or a blog, you will need a couple of things:

Platform

You will need to choose a self-hosted platform to integrate a webshop. Hosted platforms like Tumblr or Medium do not offer enough flexibility and are not recommended in cases when you are starting a webshop. Explore the opportunities, and choose some of the platforms such as WordPress, Joomla, Drupal, etc.

Hosting

Hosting is a virtual space where your site data are stored and made available to the online users. You can find hosting companies online and choose one of the plans they offer. Ideally, you should research the types of hosting available and select the option that will be perfect at the moment you are starting out. Hosting companies often limit their plans with bandwidth, storage, the number of website, installed apps, etc. You need a plan that will satisfy your current needs, but also be able to adapt as your business grows, so you can quickly switch to a more advanced solution.

Domain

Website or blog domain is your unique URL that will be used to reach your online content. Most hosting companies offer the possibility to register the domain as well. When buying a domain, you need to make sure that the name you are planning to use is available. It should be something related to your product or brand if you already have the name of that product or brand.

Social media channels

Social networks could be very useful for connecting with your followers and increasing the credibility of your brand, which is why you should set them up during the process of setting up your website. Social networks will also give you lots of options to advertise your products.

Subscribers list

Email marketing can be quite a useful tool for online promotion. When you set up your website or blog, think about ways you can encourage people to become your subscribers and follow your email updates. For starters, you could have a subscribe button. Then you can restrict the access to a certain part of your website and require users to register on the mailing list in order to gain access. Also, you could offer free downloadables, samples or something your potential customers would appreciate in exchange for an email address.

These are all the elements required for setting up your website, but you will need to have in mind that this is your online presentation. It needs to look credible and engaging. It needs to attract

people and provide enough information about you and your products. Also, it needs to be indexed by the search engines and shown in the search engine results. This means that content, content optimization, and SEO are all the factors you need to have in mind when creating your website or blog.

Set up the webshop

The next step is creating the actual webshop. For this, you will need several things.

E-commerce integration

Beside your platform to host a blog or a website, you need a specific layout of an e-commerce shop. This is commonly done by integrating an e-commerce platform to your existing platform. For example, if you are using WordPress to host your blog, you can easily set up a webshop with one of the e-commerce platforms such as [WooCommerce](), [BigCommerce](), [Shopify](), etc.

What these platforms do is they provide you with e-commerce elements you will need to successfully run your online store. This includes:

- Shopping cart - It is software that allows browsing and putting products in a virtual basket. Shopping cart directly links to the checkout.
- Checkout - The process during which the customer provides payment and shipping information.
- Payment gateway - The final stage of buying a product online ends with payment gateway, a service that processes payment for you. The software transfers the payment information from the customer to the bank using encrypted operations.

Online payment processing requires using these services to enable customers to get hold of your products using any of the means available, such as credit cards, PayPal, etc.

Make products available

Once you have all the "technical stuff" in place, your task will be to make products available to your online customers. At this point, you have defined what you are selling and how you are selling. You know your target group, and you probably have all the materials necessary to feature the products, such as images, product name, etc.

Product categories

Whether or not you will go through this step depends on how many products you have to sell. If you are selling a lot of products, or if you plan on doing so in the future, determining product categories is essential. This way you make a logical structure for your store, allowing you to organize everything properly and making sure your products really reach online customers.

Think about how the potential customers would explore your online store. What kind of items will they expect to find in each category? Is the structure intuitive enough to enable them to browse easily?

Product page

You will then need to define product pages. Again, a lot of will depend on the number of products you are selling. If you are selling only one product (and/or a couple of varieties) you will probably opt for a comprehensive product page. What is universal for all types of the product pages are these elements:

Product name

It is the first part of the page, and it is usually the most prominent part of the text. Product name sometimes includes a brand name, or it may even be the same as the brand name. Sometimes a product name can be more descriptive. What is important is for this product name to have a keyword (regardless if that is a branded, regular or long-tail keyword) which will also be used a couple more times on the actual page. Keyword optimization is an essential part of optimizing your content, which is why you should explore the topic in more details if you want to increase the online reach of your store.

Besides keywords, the entire product page should be optimized, including relevant h tags, meta description, optimizing visual content, etc. all of which are part of search engine optimization.

Product description

Within description, you will provide more information for your customers. What is important to have in mind is this. The buyers might be your email subscribers who are already familiar with you and your brand. However, your buyers might also be online users who were browsing the internet and came across your product page in the search results.

This is why the product description should provide enough information and be relevant so that any kind of potential buyer would find everything needed to make a decision to buy or not to buy.

Here are some ideas regarding the details you can provide as a part of the product description:

- Product features

- Product specification (size, color, weight, etc.)

- Advantages of the product

- Benefits it can bring

- Frequently asked questions with answers

- Testimonials or reviews

Visual elements

Visual elements can help you improve the engagement level and attract the attention of the potential buyers. Seeing how the product looks like (works, is used, etc.) is often more effective than reading about it. You could use images, videos, animations, anything really, that could help you bring your product closer to your potential buyers and present a convincing argument for them to become your customers.

Here is an example of a product page with:

- Product name

- Price

- Description

- Images

- FAQs

- Trust signals (returns, fee exchanges)

- Reviews

CLOUD 9 LIVING
Creating Memories Since 2005

HELP ∨   MY ACCOUNT   🛒 CART

DENVER ∨ 🔍   EXPERIENCE TYPE ∨   GIFT IDEAS ∨   GIFT CERTIFICATES   ABOUT   REDEEM VOUCHER

🔁 FREE RETURNS & EXCHANGES   💲 PRICE GUARANTEE   ✉ INSTANT E-VOUCHERS

Denver Experiences / Flying Experience Gifts in Denver

View Customer Photos Of This Experience

SCENIC ADVENTURE FLIGHT LESSON

FROM: $269

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ (2 REVIEWS)

Climb into the cockpit of a fixed-wing training aircraft and experience the thrill of flying on a Scenic Flight Lesson over Denver!

FULL DESCRIPTION | LOCATION & AVAILABILITY

Option & Pricing:

PLEASE SELECT   ∨

ADD TO CART

✉ **E-VOUCHER DELIVERY**
Print or Email Instantly! You can also choose your send date.

📅 **WHEN DO I CHOOSE A DATE?**
If giving as a gift, your recipient can choose a date at their convenience; otherwise, you can choose one after checkout.

✓ **HASSLE FREE POLICIES**
30 day returns. Free exchanges. No expiration dates.

ABOUT THIS EXPERIENCE

SUMMARY   **FULL DESCRIPTION**   **KEY INFO**   **FAQS**

Climb into the cockpit of a fixed-wing training aircraft and experience the thrill of flying on a Scenic Flight Lesson over Denver!

- Learn the basics of flight with an FAA Certified Flight Instructor
- Includes 30 minutes of flight simulator instruction, a pre-flight inspection of the plane and 60 minutes of flight instruction
- Take in views of the Rocky Mountains, the Flatirons, or downtown Denver!

📍 VIEW LOCATION & AVAILABILITY

EASY EXCHANGES
NO EXPIRATION DATES
30-DAY RETURNS

https://shop.cloud9living.com/denver/scenic-adventure-flight-lesson

Promote your webshop

The final step is the promotion of your webshop. For this, you will need to dig deeper into the topic of online marketing and how you can place and promote your products on the global market. Different strategies depend on the different type of products, campaigns, and goals. Nonetheless, online marketing presents a legitimate way to bring your product closer to your audience.

Here are some ideas on promoting your webshop:

- Social networks - Use social networks to create a connection with your followers and spread the news about your products.
- Paid advertising - Paid advertising is a great option to reach more online users in less time. You can use search engine advertising or social media ads.
- Email marketing - If you have a mailing list, you can use this to reach your subscribers and get them interested in the products you are selling.

These are just some of the options you can explore, and it is definitely something you will need to explore more closely to figure out how you can get the most out of each of those marketing campaigns.

For further reading about these topics which will help you get the most out of selling online, check out these resources:

[E-commerce](#)

[Email Marketing](#)

[Online Marketing](#)

[Search Engine Optimization (SEO)](#)

[Social Media Marketing](#)

5

Dropshipping

5. Dropshipping

Dropshipping is a form of selling online. Unlike traditional sale process, dropshipping has one characteristic that actually makes it unique. In dropshipping, the store that sells the products does not store those products. To find out how this entire process works and how it is an opportunity to make money online, keep reading this chapter.

https://unsplash.com/photos/JuFcQxgCXwA

What is dropshipping?

Dropshipping is a business model which allows many benefits and opportunities for selling products online. Here is how the whole process works:

- You find the products you want to resell

- You promote the products on your website, in your online store, on a marketplace, etc.

- The customer orders the product from you

- You forward the order to the supplier with the details about the customer

- The supplier packages and ships the product directly to the customer

Judging by the process, you can see that you as a seller actually have nothing to do with the actual product. You are not involved in manufacturing, packaging or shipping. Your only job is to promote the products and reach online users with that promotional activity.

The main reason why this is such a popular business model is that it requires almost no investment and nothing except for the internet connection and a computer. This means that almost anyone can start using this business model to generate income online.

Advantages of dropshipping

Take a look at the advantages and why this could be an interesting option for you to explore:

Easy to set up

You do not need any preparation, as your only tasks include finding the suppliers and presenting the products on your website or blog.

Low cost

With this kind of setup, your costs are pretty low, if there are any at all.

No storing supplies

Not only does storing supplies require organization, but it also needs physical space where your products will be stored. With dropshipping, you do not need any of these.

Flexibility

You can switch between suppliers, you can collaborate with multiple suppliers at the same time, etc. This gives you more flexibility in terms of different types of products to offer, availability, shipping method, etc. This also reduces the risk of products being out of stock.

Location independent

Are you planning to relocate temporarily or to spend a month in the Bahamas (or any other exotic island that comes to your mind)? With dropshipping, bring your laptop and your business will be with you no matter where you go.

Scalability

Dropshipping is a business model that enables you to quickly increase your profit, without actually working more. You just take care of having more orders which are directly sent to the supplier, who will handle everything.

While these benefits might seem like everything you ever hoped for from a business, you also need to have in mind that dropshipping has some disadvantages as well.

Disadvantages of dropshipping

Before you start with dropshipping, consider the negative side of this type of business model:

Lower profit margins

Unlike working with manufacturers directly, suppliers will not provide competitive prices, which will reflect on your profit margin.

Liability and reputation

The customers do not care if you are merely a middleman. You are their seller, and they will complain to you when something goes wrong, even if it is not your fault. This means that your reputation is on the line and you are reliable for any damages. Therefore, you need to think carefully about the suppliers you want to work with.

Branding

If you were to pack the products yourself, you would probably use branded packaging, offer freebies, notes, etc. All of these are a great way to reinforce the influence of your brand and create a connection with the buyers. Also, this is something you cannot achieve through dropshipping. Some suppliers might be willing to do this for you, but it will usually require payment from you, which again, lowers the profit margins.

Multiple products and suppliers

Although this is a benefit on its own, allowing you to provide a variety of products, the problem might occur when a customer orders several products sent by different suppliers. You will not be able to charge the customer increased shipping costs, but instead, you will have to cover these costs.

Competition

Many different dropshippers may be reselling the same product, which means you might face fierce competition, depending on your niche. At the same time, you need to be aware that your competitors are also the suppliers themselves. And their biggest advantage is that they often can offer a better price than you can.

No inventory to keep track of

You cannot really keep track of your inventory, so this is not something you can feature on your website. The result is that the customer may order from you and only after you contact the

supplier will you get the information if the product is available. In case you do not have products to sell, you will need to issue refunds for prepaid products.

Although as a business model it is far from perfect, dropshipping is quite casual, stress-free way to sell online. There is almost no effort in setting up such a business, and there is no hustle of tracking inventory, storing products, and shipping. The margins vary depending on the niche and the type of product, so it is recommended that you explore those before starting out. One way to get better margins is to work with manufacturers directly, instead of working with suppliers.

As a low risk and low investment business model, dropshipping is perfect for beginners. It is also for people who want to sell a variety of different products. It could also be a "side business project" for someone already making money online or having a full-time job.

Dropshipping is not for you if you want to work on branding and create an influential brand name. Also, if you are not comfortable with profit margins, and you want to earn more money, dropshipping might not be an ideal solution for you.

Finally, when you decide that this is a type of business model you want to pursue, you will approach this like with setting up your webshop. You will need a platform through which you will sell, you will need to present the products in an engaging way, and you will need to explore online marketing to promote the products.

6

Freelancing

6. Freelancing

Freelancing is a profession that has been growing in popularity, mainly because of the advantages it provides. Freelancing defies traditional job standards and requirements and brings equal opportunities for people worldwide. No more job commuting, no more 9-5 workday, and dress code. People who were not able to fit into work environments and are unable to commute long distances can excel as freelancers.

However, things are not always as they seem. As with any other of these opportunities to make money online, freelancing also has drawbacks which is why the job might not be the right fit for just about anyone.

https://unsplash.com/photos/hGV2TfOh0ns

Who is a freelancer

A freelancer is a self-employed person. This person works with clients, and this often includes working with multiple clients at the same time. Freelancers offer their services to other companies or even to individuals.

In terms of working hours, a freelancing job is quite a flexible one. Usually, there are no specific work hours during the day that a freelancer needs to work which gives them the freedom to organize their day more independently, as long as they leave enough time to complete all the work by the instructed deadline. Occasionally, clients might require for a freelancer to be available during a specified period of the day, but this is something both parties should agree upon upfront.

Freelancers can do this job as a full-time job which means they will devote all of their time to finding freelancing gigs. What this means is that their income entirely depends on the work they do and the projects they complete successfully. Unlike with traditional job, freelancers do not have a fixed salary. The income usually differs from month to month.

A certain part of freelancers retains their 9-5 job and do freelancing in their free time. This is a well-known road to starting freelancing full-time. People keep their regular job until they have enough clients and experience to make their living through freelancing only. Keeping the old job provides security regarding steady income and sort of a "safety net" if things do not go as planned with freelancing.

Advantages

Here are the most important advantages to have in mind when you consider becoming a freelancer:

Flexible hours

Again, this is the best advantage one can get with freelancing. If you are not a morning person, you can set your work day to start at noon. Because, why not? The job allows you to do this, as long as you do all your tasks during the day.

Independence

As a freelancer, you work as an independent contractor. Unlike employees, you have more control of your work and you do not have obligations to complete the work you do not want. However, in this case, your reputation is at stake, and you risk losing a client.

Set your own price

Freelancers usually get paid more than employees. First of all, besides work hours freelancers also have to cover their overhead and other expenses which regular employees do not have. All of this needs to be calculated in the freelancer's price. Furthermore, as a freelancer, you get to

decide how much you are worth. You get to set your own price and only work with clients who are willing to pay that price.

Easy to start

If you already know how to provide a particular service, you most likely also have the equipment needed to do that. For example, if you are a web developer, chances are you already have a computer. This means that your costs to startup your freelancing career will be pretty minimal if existent at all.

Growing market

The global economy is developing in such a way that it welcomes more and more freelancers each year. Unlike traditional employees, freelancers become a better choice for companies who prefer not having to commit to an employee and to provide long-term contracts. Instead, working with freelancers gives them more flexibility as well, which is why freelancing services are in such high demand.

No barriers

As a freelancer, you can work from anywhere in the world, for any company in the world. There really should be no barriers stopping you from seeking jobs globally. This opens up so many exciting opportunities.

Disadvantages

To realize that things are not always as ideal as they seem, you also need to take into account these disadvantages of freelancing.

Deadlines and schedules

Even if your work hours are flexible, you will be working with clients who have deadlines and busy schedules. This means that occasionally you will have to work even if you have not planned on doing so. You might also end up pulling an all-nighter when the situation is urgent. Sometimes, you might even have to adapt to the client's time zone, which might be the opposite of yours.

No consistent work

Although you might be able to get some regular clients and ensure a relatively steady monthly income, in general freelancing is a gig work. This means that at times you will have so much work to do that you will end up sitting glued to your computer for hours. Other times, there might not

be enough work. This means that you will take opportunities even if you know you are pretty busy, just to ensure that you earn enough to cover for a less busy period.

Learning to manage and prioritize

Lack of consistency in work will also require you to learn to manage your clients and tasks. From time to time, you will even have to prioritize one over the other, and you have to be able to make the right decisions because these affect your relationship with the clients.

Relying on your reputation

Many future projects will depend on your reputation. You need to have a shiny portfolio and good recommendations to be able to score better projects in the future. It is also important to maintain a good relationship with your clients and to be able to do so, you will have to be successful at communicating well with people.

Taking care of yourself

Freelancing does not come with perks such as health insurance, paid taxes, and similar expenses. These are all expenses defined by the country you live in, and you will need to take care of all of them on your own. When you are a freelancer, it is not required to start your own company to be able to work on projects, but there are specific regulations which you need to explore. Since this is a relatively new career, these regulations are frequently updated, so it is best to stay informed.

No sick/maternity leave

Freelancers usually do not have sick or maternity leave. They can take a couple of days off, and most clients will not mind that, but unlike traditional jobs, most freelancers are not getting paid unless they work and provide results.

Getting started as a freelancer

There are many different ways to start freelancing. One of the most common ways is to use freelancing websites such as Upwork, Freelancer, and many similar platforms. The main reason why these are a jumping board for those starting with freelancing is that they enable you to begin immediately. All you need to do is to create an account, and you can start browsing the jobs. Also, these platforms have established a reputation in the online world and already have a considerable number of clients looking for freelancers. You will simply browse the platform looking for the specific jobs or skills, and you instantly get access to a massive number of job posts that match such search query.

What most freelancers see as a drawback is the fact that you will mostly find less paid jobs on these platforms. Have in mind that this is not the rule. But the idea with clients who post ads on freelancing platforms is to find good freelancers usually at the lowest price. The whole system works like a sort of bidding, and your price quote is something that will usually influence the decision.

In addition, these platforms charge a fee or a membership. Either way, a certain percentage of the payment goes to the freelancing platform. This means that a certain fee will be reduced from your payment, and sometimes you will have to charge your clients more to be able to cover this fee. When placing a bid on a job proposal, you need to take a look at who is paying the fee. In most cases, the fee is deducted from the freelancer's fee. For example, Upwork usually takes a 20% fee from freelancers, but the fee is reduced if you have long-term clients and reach a certain threshold regarding payments. Occasionally, there may be an additional fee for the client as well.

On the other hand, you can avoid freelancing platforms and start on your own. It might be more difficult to promote yourself and get job opportunities, but it is not impossible, and you have a lot of promotion tools to help you along the way. The main benefit is that you are completely independent. You are not at risk of getting your profile suspended out of the blue or paying extra fees. Being your own boss gives you more freedom and flexibility.

The usual road is starting with a freelancing platform, building experience, and portfolio, and eventually becoming independent. Once you have the expertise and reputation, and perhaps a couple of long-term clients, it is much easier to become fully independent.

In both cases, regardless if you choose to start with one or the other, here are a couple of things that are good to have:

Create an online profile

You should create an online profile people can check out to find out more about you. Share your portfolio as a part of the profile. Use social networks such as LinkedIn or Twitter to create your social media profiles and help you with building your reputation. You could also create a Facebook page. In general, social networks can help you interact with other freelancers, share experience and get in touch with potential clients.

Also, it is helpful to have a website. It does not have to be anything fancy or complicated. A simple website with a couple of pages, maybe with a blog if you are hoping to get writing projects or to share your best designs or photos. All of this is going to help you show off your work and advertise your services.

Choose a niche

Even though you might be willing to try many different freelancing jobs, there is usually a specific niche you can focus on. For example, design, translation, writing, web development, etc.

When you determine this field you work in, you can go even a step further and be more specific. For example, you might be a designer that only works on logos. Or a writer who writes only about a particular topic.

Even though this limits your potential contracts at first, in the long run, it gives you sort of an edge. It is like this. When you begin your freelancing career, there will be a sort of a learning curve. You will need more time and effort to complete jobs that will later become your routine. If you do more similar jobs, you will acquire this routine much faster. This essentially means that you will get better at your job. And the better you are, the better your reputation is. Of course, you will be able to charge more as an expert and someone who specialize in a certain niche.

As a beginner, you might avoid choosing the niche at first, and take the opportunity to try out many different job types. This is also a helpful approach because you will see first hand what kind of jobs you like and enjoy doing.

Determine the target clients

Having a niche and knowing precisely what you want to do is also going to be useful when determining who your clients are. While freelancing platforms mainly focus on browsing jobs, not clients, if you are starting solo, you will benefit a lot by knowing who your potential clients are. For example, those can be small or medium-sized companies. Or companies that work in a particular industry or are established in a specific location, etc. You will create a portfolio that is more effective and you will shape your approach to make it more relatable to them.

Also, you can contact the clients directly when you know you could potentially be interested in your work.

Set your rates

A lot of people are uncomfortable discussing money, especially those starting out. They do not know industry standards, they do not even know how much they are worth. However, it is something essential when starting out.

Start with an hourly rate, as it is kind of easier to decide. Try to determine an hourly rate you are comfortable with. Have in mind that the money you get needs to cover your expenses related to

being a freelancer (health insurance, website hosting, etc.). Try to explore the rates in your industry and in your country.

Have in mind that rates can be quite different from industry to industry. Even if you are in the same industry, people from different countries have different rates for the same service, simply because they are adapting their rates based on the living standards. It is a lot to think about, but it is a calculation that will help you narrow down the jobs you want to pursue, and avoid wasting time on jobs that just do not pay enough. Also, your rate might be different for weekend work, working under a short deadline, etc.

When it comes to project rates, you will usually discuss the rates for each project individually. To make an estimate, you will need to have the insights into the work that needs to be done. You should also be able to roughly estimate the time you will need to complete such a project. Based on all of those, you can create your project rate.

Types of work you can do as a freelancer

There are a lot of different types of work you can do as a freelancer. The choice of work you are going to do is based on your knowledge as some of these require specific education. For example, you cannot be a Spanish to English translator if you do not know Spanish.

Still, there are a lot of jobs that do not require specific education or experience. Instead, the client will probably walk you through the process and show you how the job is done.

Web, Mobile & Software Dev

All Web, Mobile & Software Dev
Desktop Software Development
Ecommerce Development
Game Development
Mobile Development
Product Management
QA & Testing
Scripts & Utilities
Web Development
Web & Mobile Design
Other - Software Development

IT & Networking

All IT & Networking
Database Administration
ERP / CRM Software
Information Security
Network & System Administration
Other - IT & Networking

Data Science & Analytics

All Data Science & Analytics
A/B Testing
Data Visualization
Data Extraction / ETL
Data Mining & Management
Machine Learning
Quantitative Analysis
Other - Data Science & Analytics

Engineering & Architecture

All Engineering & Architecture
3D Modeling & CAD
Architecture
Chemical Engineering
Civil & Structural Engineering
Contract Manufacturing
Electrical Engineering
Interior Design
Mechanical Engineering
Product Design
Other - Engineering & Architecture

Design & Creative

All Design & Creative
Animation
Audio Production
Graphic Design
Illustration
Logo Design & Branding
Photography
Presentations
Video Production
Voice Talent
Other - Design & Creative

Writing

All Writing
Academic Writing & Research
Article & Blog Writing
Copywriting

Translation

All Translation
General Translation
Legal Translation
Medical Translation
Technical Translation

Legal

All Legal
Contract Law
Corporate Law
Criminal Law
Family Law
Intellectual Property Law
Paralegal Services
Other - Legal

Admin Support

All Admin Support
Data Entry
Personal / Virtual Assistant
Project Management
Transcription
Web Research
Other - Admin Support

Customer Service

All Customer Service
Customer Service
Technical Support
Other - Customer Service

https://www.upwork.com/i/job-categories/

Here are some categories to have in mind:

Admin support

Admin support group includes a variety of jobs, and some of those do not require any knowledge on the matter, especially if the client provides instructions.

- Personal assistant
- Virtual assistant
- Project management
- Data entry
- Web research

Customer service

This group of jobs may come with fixed working hours during which you will need to be online and provide support to the customers. Alternatively, you can provide support through emails, but still, it is expected from you to be quite responsive and avoid making customers wait.

Development

This is such a vast area which includes the actual development work as well as management of such projects. It includes:

- Web development
- Mobile development
- Web and mobile design
- Game development
- Other software development tasks/projects
- Project management
- Product management

For these jobs, some experience and knowledge is usually required to get you started, even if it is an entry-level position.

Translation

Even though you will narrow down your search by focusing on those languages you speak, you can go even a step further and specialize in a particular area such as:

- Medical translation

- Legal translation

- Technical translation

- Economy and business translation

- General translation

Design

Design career requires knowledge and creativity to be able to work on such projects. Some crash courses could help you with more simple projects, but in general, learning the software for photo, video and audio editing is the main requirement.

- Graphic design

- Logo design

- Photography

- Presentation

- Video production

- Audio production

- Animation

Writing

Having in mind that writing is quite a popular job in the freelancing industry, you will find a separate chapter on writing later on in this ebook.

At this point, you can notice that the scope of potential freelancing jobs is quite vast. The best of all is that there are jobs that do not require specific expertise or even experience, which actually gives an opportunity to almost anyone to try this as their career.

Where to find a job as a freelancer?

Like you have seen, having your own website and promoting your services can be a good start, but if you would like to start with freelancing platforms, here are some of the most popular currently on the market.

Fiverr

Fiverr was founded in 2010. as a platform to buy and sell digital services. So far it has maintained its $5 reputation as all the services start at $5. Jobs on Fiverr are called gigs, and the basic value is $5. Once freelancers reach a minimum number of sales, they can add so-called "gig extras" and thus increase the price.
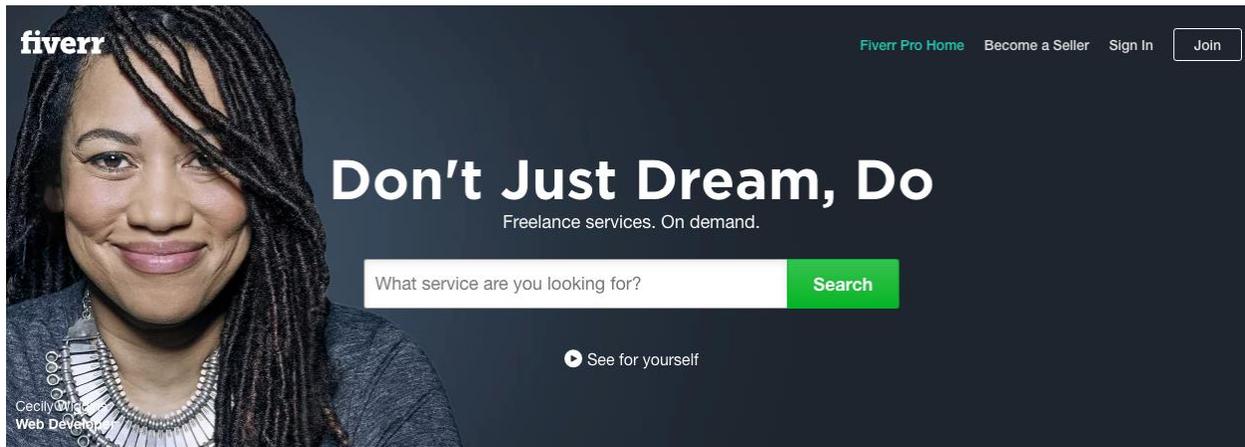
The company takes $1 for each $5 you earn or 20%. When you first start as a freelancer on the platform, the number of active gigs and gig extras is limited, but as you stay active and fulfill the requirements, you will get to unlock more benefits.

Upwork

Upwork was introduced in 2015 as a merged platform of two global freelancing platforms Elance and oDesk. You start by creating a profile and submitting your proposals when you find interesting jobs. With a free membership, you get 60 connects per month, which limits the number of jobs you can apply to. Roughly, you can apply up to 30 jobs each one requiring 2 connects.
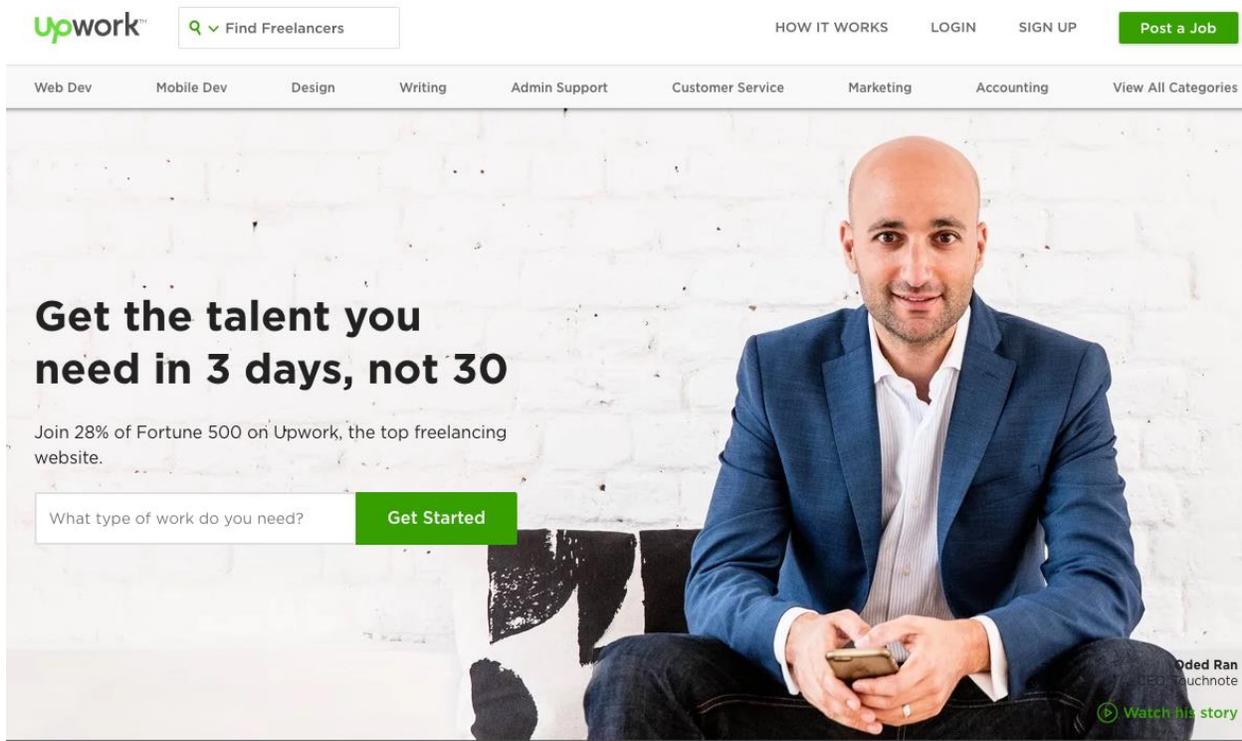
Rising talent program is built to help increase your visibility when first starting out. There is also a top rated program, which helps you make a good reputation and get access to better jobs.

Starting fee for freelancers per contract with less than $500 is 20%. The platform encourages you to go for long-term projects, so once your billing with the same clients exceeds $500, the freelancer's fee is reduced to 10%. For billings with the same client that exceed $10000, the fee is 5%. Upwork offers a paid membership with 70 connects, possibility to buy more connects, hide your earrings, to view competitors' bids and customize your profile.

Freelancer

Freelancer represents a large community and opportunities to find jobs across many different categories. Freelancer has several types of jobs, so the fee can vary. You can apply for fixed price projects where you have an introduction fee once your bid is selected and then 10% or $5 whichever is greater. For hourly projects, there is a fee on every payment, and it is 10%. It is free to apply to contest and the fee (10% or $5 whichever is greater) is charged once you are awarded the project. When you are offering services, the fee is 20%. The fees are charged upfront.
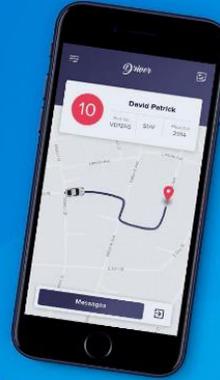
As you build your reputation, you can unlock access to a preferred freelancer program, where the project fee is 15%, and no charges are made upfront. Free members have 8 bids per month. Freelancer also offers paid membership plans with 5 types of plans with increasing number of bids, contest entries and skills added.

iFreelance

Unlike others, iFreelance lets you keep 100% of your earnings, but it requires a paid membership so you cannot join for free. You can look for work in two ways, by browsing projects, or directly advertising your services to the employers.

The platform offers marketing tools such as buttons and personalized banners to help you get more work, as well as performance tools to help you improve your success. Membership plans start from $6.25 per month.

People Per Hour

You start by creating a profile which is then ranked and shown to the employers who browse the platform. Being active on the platform People Per Hour and getting reviews will help you rank better.

You can send 15 proposals a month for free, and you can buy more. The fee model is similar to Upwork's. For lifetime billings per buyer below $700 there is 20% fee. Billings per buyer between $700 and $7000 require 7.5% fee, and lifetime billings per buyer over $7000 have 3.5% fee.
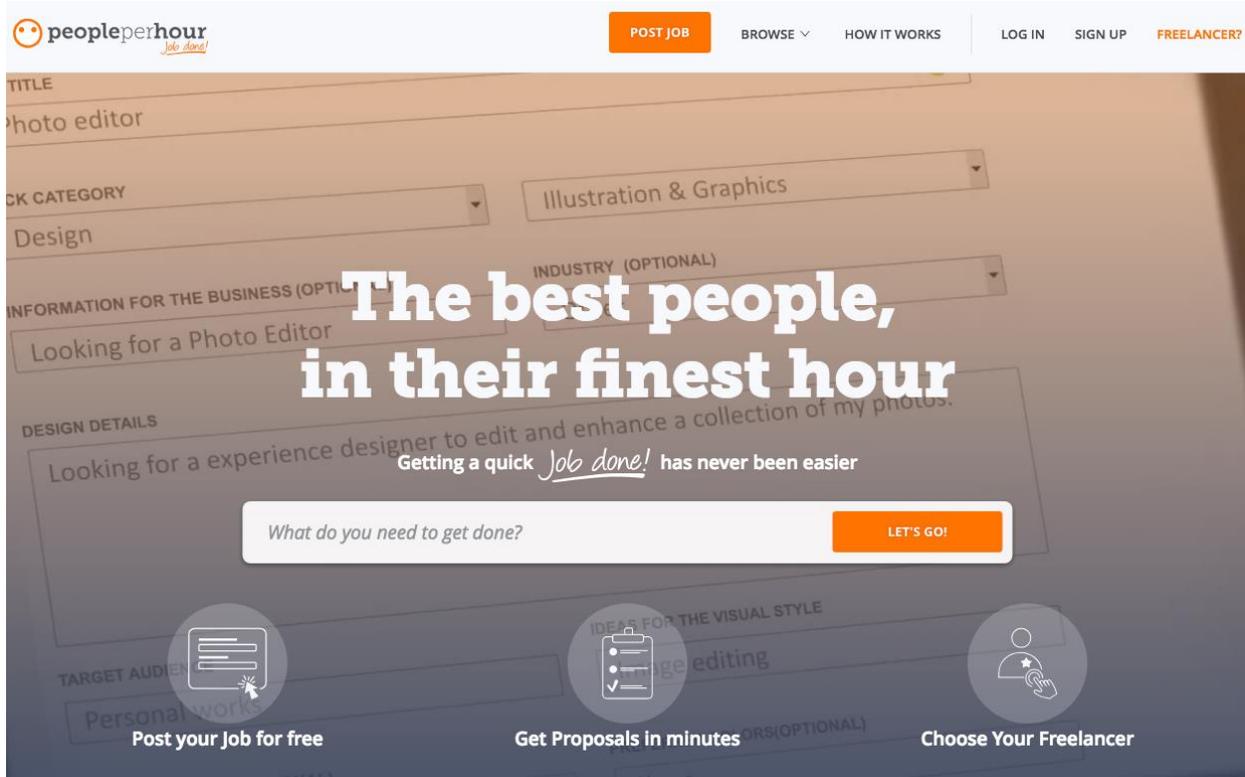
Final recommendation

When you search online, you will probably find more platforms for freelancers, and some of them might specialize in one industry (such as 99design). These companies here are some of the largest currently regarding the number of jobs offered and the number of registered freelancers. This means that they offer a lot of opportunities to find work. At the same time, the fact that they have so many freelancers means that they are quite competitive markets. Although this should by no means discourage you, it is simply worth having in mind that finding jobs is not always easy, especially if you are first starting out.

Since your career will depend on the work you do on one (or several) of these platforms, it is very important to go through the terms of service document. You need to be familiar with the processes that are allowed or prohibited. For example, most of these platforms prohibit taking clients to another platform or even communicating outside their own messaging system. This is why it is important to know your rights and obligations and keep your profile in good standing.

7

Rent Online

7. Rent Online

As opposed to other activities, where you need to actually do some sort of work, with renting, you will only have to handle the management of the process. This is why this could be a great passive income for you. And doing it online enables you to reach larger audience and thus maximize the potential revenue.

For starters, you will need an asset you will rent. Unless you already own it, this would be considered an investment. This asset can be an apartment, a house, an office space, equipment, such as a video game console, equipment for photography, video recording, etc. You could even rent tables and chairs for events, or any other items related to event organizing.

What to rent

The decision on what to rent depends on multiple factors:

Things you already have

Since this does not require an investment, this is quite simple to set up. What you need to have in mind though is that what you rent will become damaged, or even broken/ruined. For example, if you rent an apartment, you will need to clean it after the tenants leave. Depending on how long they were staying, you might need to do some renovation works such as painting, replacing furniture. The same goes for renting equipment. If you rent a camera for video recording, it might get broken eventually and require a replacement.

These things happen, so if you are too attached to that camera and would hate to see it broken by a stranger, you might want to avoid renting it. Also, it is helpful to know exactly the balance between the value of the investment and the value of your income from renting it.

Buying things to rent

If you do not have the asset you want to rent, you will need to buy it first. Since you have a freedom to choose the asset, it is helpful if you first do the research and determine what is missing on the market. This will give you the most chances to stay competitive. Again, balancing between the costs of investment and potential revenue is always advisable to make sure you are profitable.

Local aspect

Regardless of what you are renting, this kind of process of making money online is still quite local oriented. What this means is that you can use the internet to spread the news and attract customers, but your "product" is usually based in a specific location.

The most obvious example is renting property. You can find online customers, you can even have foreigners staying in your property, but your property is only for those living in or visiting a particular location.

With equipment and similar assets you can rent, it might be more flexible and you might be able to cover a greater area. But you should always have in mind the costs of transport or shipping as a factor. At times, it might not be worth sending something if you risk damaging it or the transport costs are too high.

How to rent online

As with selling, you really have two options. First, there is a more time-consuming method of selling through your own blog or website, in which case generating traffic might be the biggest obstacle for you. Even though you will have full control and creative power to promote your asset, you will need to invest a lot in advertising and spreading the word about what you do. This option is recommended for those who will do renting on a large scale and turn this into a business.

If you want to go for an option where it is not as difficult to get traffic, using online platforms for renting might be the way to go. This gives you an instant boost because your listing is immediately available to the online users who visit this kind of platform. Even though being a member and renting this way might require a certain fee, it is still a great option regardless of the assets you have to rent.

The initial phase includes creating an account and waiting for it to be approved. Sometimes, you will need to pay a membership fee or the company might deduct the percent of your income. Most of the platforms come with the review system, so both owners and renters are rated by the community. This enables building reputation and increasing trust with future customers.

Where to rent online

There are a lot of websites that specialize in such a service, and you will probably find some of them locally, which is probably the best way to rent. Some of the popular platforms for renting include:

- [AirBNB](#)

This is a leader in renting homes online, enabling individuals to earn a lot by providing accommodation for travellers and business people. Once you join, you will create a compelling listing with lots of images to promote your property. The properties are usually rent per night.

Even though it is a competitive market, with great location and online promotion, you can earn quite a bit by renting your property this way.
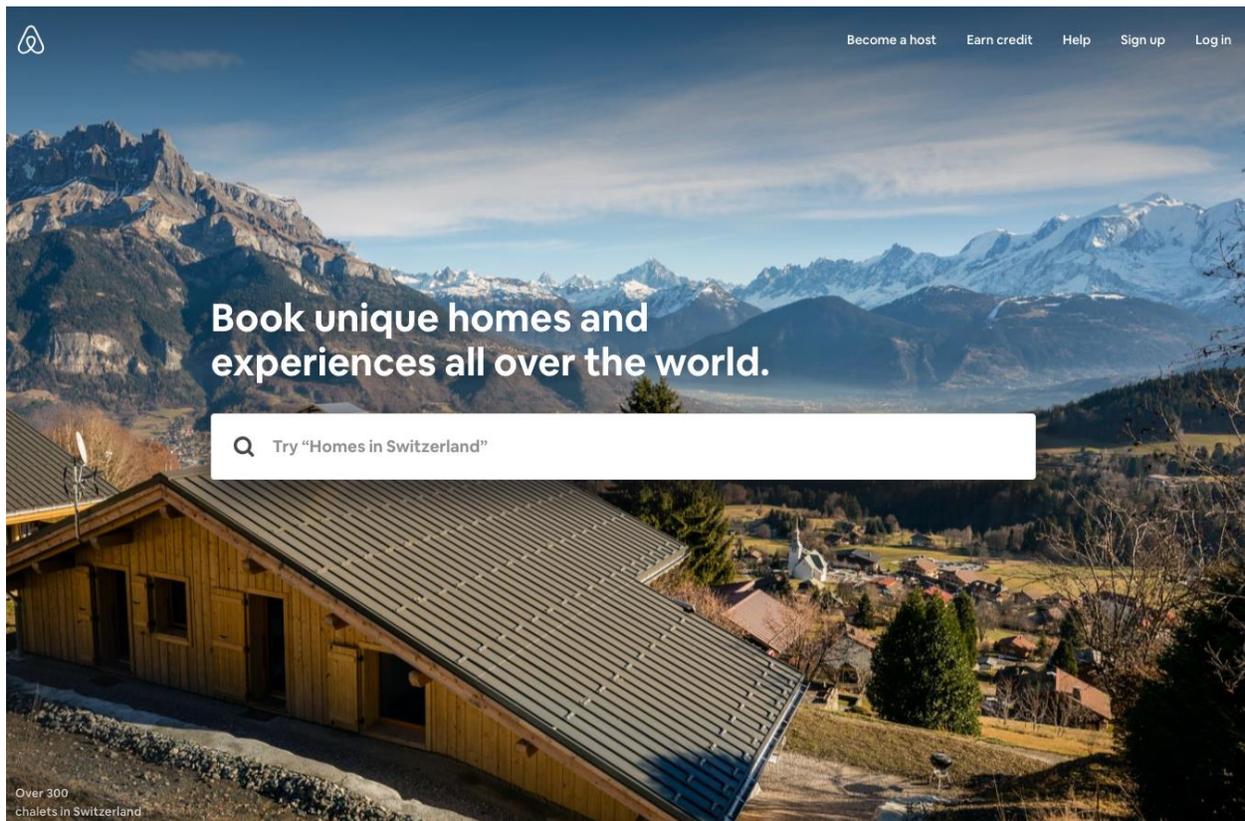
Renting a variety of products

Here are a couple of websites that offer a large selection of products, which means that you can rent almost anything you own here:

- [Rnters](#)
- [Zilok](#)
- [Rentzi](#) (Australia based)
- [Skipti](#) (Boston oriented)

- [Find2rent](#) (India based)

Regardless of the platform you choose to go for, it is always good to explore their terms of services. For example, some platforms prohibit renting property, while they allow pretty much everything else. Also, you should choose a company which targets your location, so you can get the most relevant exposure and be able to get genuine customers.

8

Starting and Monetizing Your Blog

8. Starting and Monetizing Your Blog

If you explore the top careers in the recent years, you will probably see blogging as one of the most desirable jobs. Even though there is a common belief that bloggers are only writers or journalists, who publish their work online independently, starting your own blog requires other skills apart from writing.

https://unsplash.com/photos/npxXWgQ33ZQ

A thing or two about blogging

Blogging started out as a form of published work, primarily articles, during the late 1990s. People who couldn't or didn't want their work to be published offline could use this form of publishing. The most significant advantage (apart from complete independence) is the fact that this kind of publishing enabled everyone to reach the global audience.

Over the years, blogging has been adopted as a business strategy for promotion and the way to reach online users.

Even today, anyone can start a blog, and you can literally set everything up within minutes. The main things you will need include:

- Blog name

- Blogging platform

- Hosting (Optional, you will only need it if you use self-managed platform)

These are only the essentials, but you can also have other things like a logo, plugins, blogging community, social media profiles, etc. To find out more about blogging essentials, and how to start a blog in the first place (the whole process explained from choosing a platform to publishing the first post), check another course offered at emarketinginstitute.org.

Even though starting is easy, this does not mean that everyone will be successful with blogging. There are thousands and millions of blogs out there that have never made a dime, and probably never will. Also, some blogs allow earning money indirectly.

If you are in the process of considering blogging as your way to make money online, the first thing you will need to think about is writing. So, you need content on your blog. This content is usually in the form of written articles. Images can also be added to enhance the visual aspect of the written material. Also, there is that video format of a blog, called a vlog, where the content is presented in the form of a video.

Your first step is to think about this content and try to answer a couple of very practical questions to develop an idea or a plan on how you want to eventually earn from your content.

- What kind of content will you publish?

- Who will create content? You, contractors, ghost authors, etc.

- Who is your target group? Who are you writing for?

- Why do you want this content? What do you hope to achieve?

- How often do you want to publish new content?

- What is the purpose of your content? How do you wish to monetize it? (You will see a couple of ideas later on, but if you already have ideas of your own, write them down.)

Beyond writing

The next step is considering things beyond writing. You have to be aware that there is so much more to blogging than writing. It is essential to know at least the basics of online marketing to be able to optimize and manage your blog with success.

Start with optimization

Explore the topic of SEO to find out how your content looks like to the online users, and how the search engines see it. You will also discover why pleasing both is a must if you want to get any traffic. Some of the concepts included in the process of optimization of a blog and blog content are:

- Keyword research
- Title optimization
- Page speed optimization
- Image optimization
- Link building

Online promotion of your blog

Online promotion includes multiple methods of promoting your blog content enabling it to reach your target group successfully. There are free ways to promote content (for example to your social media followers or email subscribers), and there are paid options which include search engine advertising, social media advertising, etc.

The main purpose of any of these campaigns is for it to help you achieve your goals. You should not promote a blog post only to get more visits to this page without having a purpose. But if you are promoting a blog post which has a lead magnet to generate leads, this might be a campaign worth investing in.

How to earn money from blogging

Establishing your presence online is the first step. It all starts with your blog, and this is something you must never forget. Some people tend to get carried away with monetization and focus on this aspect, but if you want to have a blog that brings money, you have to have a successful blog. And no money will come if you do not invest a lot of time, dedication, and often money into your blog.

In most cases, these strategies will be heavily influenced by your blog performance. If you have a lot of traffic, you are going to maximize the results obtained from the monetization. And to maximize the traffic, you need to have an outstanding blog, one which deserves trust and provides value.

You also have to understand that there are direct and indirect ways to earn money from your blog.

Monetizing your blog

Let us focus on direct ways to earn from your blog first. Some of these might be suitable for your blog, some might not, and you can also use multiple strategies if you can make them all work for you.

Displaying banners

The idea with this approach is to have visual ads on your blog, usually shared in the header, sidebar or footer of your blog pages. The more exposure these banners get, the more profitable they will be as they will attract your blog readers. When you work with a company which you will promote on your blog, you offer your own pricing and promotion terms, or you agree upon terms regarding the promotion tracking and price.

The easiest way for you is to go for fixed pricing. This means that you will set up a fixed price of how much your blog space is worth and the company that is interested in the promotion will need to pay this price for the banner to appear. The price is usually set for annual promotion, but any time interval is acceptable, as long as the price reflects the period during which the promotion will be active.

The second option is to track clicks. In this case, the company you are promoting will be paying you based on clicks. Occasionally, if you have a lot of traffic, this might be even more cost effective than selling space for a fixed price. But it requires more management regarding tracking clicks and calculating payment, usually monthly.

AdSense

AdSense is a dynamic form of advertising displayed on your blog. Unlike having one static banner, the AdSense program enhances the dynamic ads, which are determined by a complex algorithm.
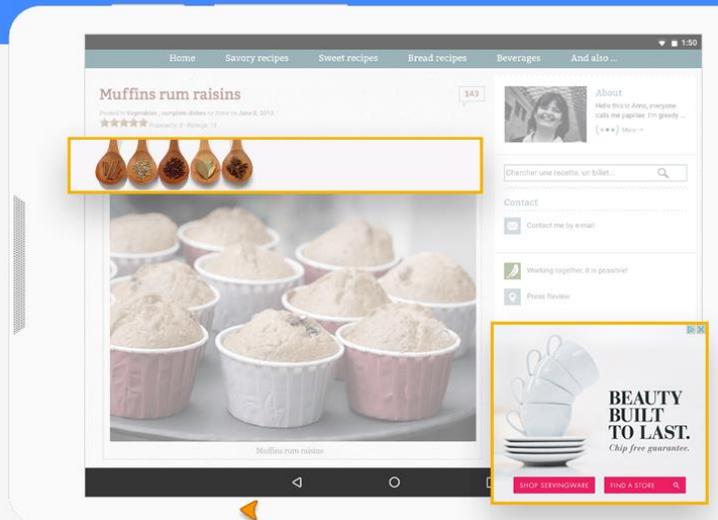
A common way through which the displayed ads are selected is remarketing. This is the situation when the ads are optimized based on the search history of the online users. For example, if the user has searched for HootSuite software, but no purchase has been made, and you have a blog about social media, the ad featuring HootSuite platform might appear if the company uses such method of advertising. So it remarkets to the users who already have some interest in their product.

To start using AdSense, you will need to join the online program provided by Google. Once you sign up and you are approved, you will set up the display ad space on your blog. You will also fill in your account, so the software learns how to display the most relevant ads to your visitors. For example, if you have a women fashion blog, you might not want to feature ads that promote men's fashion.

Earning income through this form of advertising is completely passive. Once you set up everything, all you need to do is to promote your blog and the AdSense program does everything for you. The main drawback is that the income generated through this form of advertising is not that considerable. You will have to have thousands of visitors to see some profit. Even so, it is a strategy you worth exploring as a way to monetize your blog.

Sponsored posts/reviews

This kind of blog monetization strategy offers a lot of flexibility and opportunity to work with numerous different brands. It includes creating a piece of content, usually a blog article, where you will mention the particular brand. Based on your agreement with the company you are promoting, you can be paid a fixed price for this job, you can track clicks, or you can even track sales (especially if you are promoting a particular product).

It is important to stay consistent with your blog style and still maintain credibility with your audience even if you are promoting a business. Avoid promoting useless, irrelevant or fundamentally bad products or services, because this will damage your reputation and you will lose your audience.

With sponsored reviews or posts, you need to balance things. You want to tell nice things about the product to encourage people to buy it. On the other hand, you want to think about the relationship which you have with your audience. Have in mind that you do have a certain level of credibility and respect, which you want to maintain. Avoid sounding too salesy and using premade product description. Instead, keep your regular voice and style, so that this can still be recognizable and relatable to your target group, even if you are promoting something.

Affiliate marketing

Affiliate marketing is a performance-based marketing. It is a strategy that is based on tracking the performance and enabling you to earn income this way. The method has a lot in common with previously mentioned types of advertising where the clicks on link are necessary to track conversions.

You will find out more about Affiliate Marketing in a separate chapter.

Selling your own product(s)

Besides promoting stuff others are selling, you could start selling your own products. These can be:

- Products you create
- Products someone makes for you
- Products that you buy and resell

At this point, you can see a merge of blogging with selling, as two ways of earning money online. Here is how they perfectly complement each other. You might be successful in blogging, but you cannot charge for the visits, right? So, through your content, you start promoting your products.

People who trust your opinion and your reputation will be more likely to become your customers than if you have no credibility in the online world. On the other hand, when setting up your online store, you will soon discover that getting traffic will be the greatest obstacle to overcome. This is where blogging kicks in as a platform enabling you to establish a connection with the online users and increase the chances of selling online.

What you need to have in mind here is to choose the product(s) that is relevant to your target group. As a blog owner, you have a certain following on social networks, email subscribers, regular readers, etc. Instead of looking for new customers, come up with the product your customers will need and use. Your audience is one of the most significant assets you can have at this point because those are the people most likely to buy from you.

Selling your services

Finally, besides selling your blog space or products, you could promote your services with your blog. This is especially a good strategy if you are an expert on the topic. When you start a blog, you will choose a niche, which is usually something you are interested in or something you know a lot about.

As an expert, you can do a lot of services from your niche. You can do consulting, advising, you can do freelance jobs (such as translating, managing marketing campaign, etc.). Besides gaining credibility among your audience, your blog will also enjoy a reputation in the industry you work in. This is how you can promote what you do through the blog.

Like with selling products, it is advisable that your blog content would be targeted at the users who are interested in your services, to ensure maximum exposure.

Indirectly making money from blogging

While selling and promoting are considered a direct type of making money, blogging enables this indirect profit that can be obtained. Here is the thing.

Blogging enables you to specialize in a specific niche, to become a respected voice in the industry and build your reputation. This reputation of yours is something you could make money from. Just like you are using your reputation to feature affiliate links or sponsored stories, your reputation can bring other perks such as:

- Travels and/or accommodation
- Attendance at the conferences
- Getting paid to hold a speech or participate in an event

- Getting deals and paid contracts

- Opportunities to work with brands

The list certainly does not end here, but these are some of the most common ways to make money from blogging. In these situations, you would be cashing in on your reputation and your influence, which is how we get to the following chapter where you will find out more about how to become an influencer and how to monetize it.

9

Become an Influencer

9. Become an Influencer

Here is another trendy career that allows an opportunity to make money online. To understand how this can be used to your advantage and what kind of possibilities this offers, you will need to understand the basics of influencer marketing.
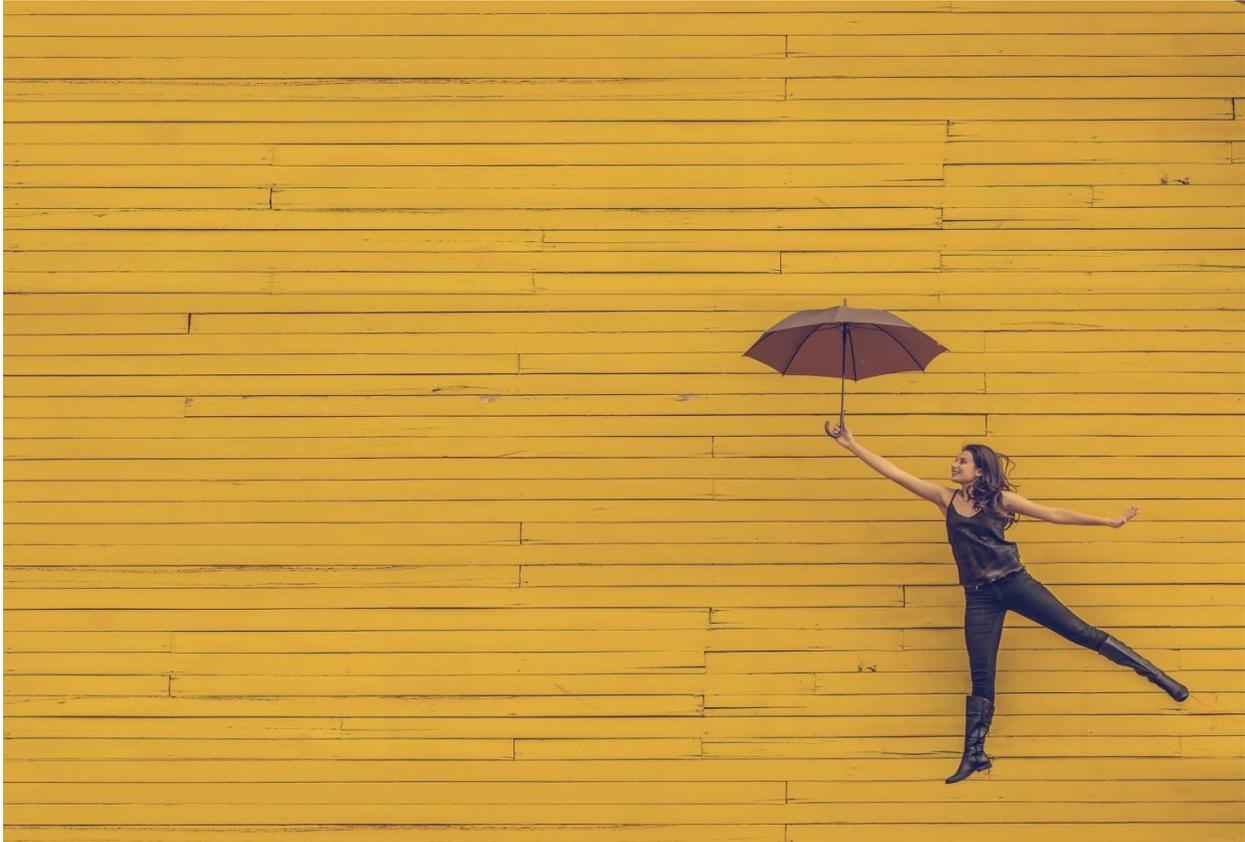
What is influencer marketing?

Influencer marketing represents a form of marketing that relies on the influence of an individual or a brand in the purpose of influencing target audience and eventually affecting their buying decision.

So, on the one hand, we have an influencer. That is the person who has formed a particular identity in the online world. Influencers are people who communicate well, who are inspiring and interesting. They are often knowledgeable about a specific field they specialize in, and they enjoy respect from their community. Influencers usually have following on social networks where they are most likely to interact with those followers and share their work. Since social networks

present a limited outlet for sharing content, most influencers usually have their own website or blog.

On the other side, we have online users who are influenced by these individuals. Online users admire them, learn from them, respect and trust their opinion. They usually follow them on social media. Another option to follow someone's work is by subscribing to a newsletter. This is one of the ways influencers can communicate with the online users.

Once you have in mind these two sides you can understand the whole process more easily. Influencers frequently share their content and opinions with the followers. Great influence ensures that the content will reach the larger number of followers. This gives the influencers an opportunity to earn from their influence. Particular brands can sponsor the content and opinions they share, and this is the most common way to monetize the influence, but it is certainly not the only one.

What do you need to monetize the influence?

It is commonly believed that having a lot of social media followers means you have a lot of influence. Even though regular online users might believe that statement, brands and companies know better. The number of social media followers alone is not a reliable metric. These followers can be obtained by promoting your social media profiles with paid advertising, but it does not make you an influencer. Unless there is engagement, these followers are passive, and it is debatable how much visibility you obtain among such followers.

To evaluate someone's influence, one must get access to more data, such as:

- The data about social network activity (engagement, interaction with the followers, etc.)
- The number of email subscribers and the level of the interaction
- Other details about the influencer (important contracts or collaborations in the past, association with a particular company, etc.)

These and similar details can provide insights into how influential someone is.

Another factor affects the positioning of the influencers is niche. Situation is quite different from one field to the other, and you cannot compare the influencers working in a different niche and having different target group.

Successful influencers have chosen their niche. They have their target group in mind whenever they create content, whenever they address them publicly in a post. Also, successful influencers know what their audience needs and finds interesting, which directly affects the type of opportunities they can use to monetize this influence.

Therefore, to monetize your influence, you will need to:

- Choose a niche

- Define your target group

- Have your target group in mind when creating content

- Maintain and nurture your relationship with the audience

- Have in mind that monetization relies on your reputation

- Work on projects that you believe in

The final idea you should have in mind that influence is usually not something that happens overnight. Every influencer you see now had to start somewhere and gradually build the audience and gain the respect. Influencers are aware that their entire career depends on their influence and their reputation, so this is something they need to nurture in order to be able to monetize it.

Opportunities to monetize influence

There are so many opportunities for influencers to make money online, and the number of those keeps growing as businesses are starting to recognize the potential of this form of online advertising.

It is also important to have in mind that these opportunities depend on two things:

- Your influence - Greater influence usually means you will be able to work with bigger companies and brands.

- Your niche - The type of industry you specialize in dictates the opportunities that will be offered to you

Apart from the opportunities you will get based on your influence and niche, these two factors will also have a strong impact on how much money you can make as an influencer. What is safe to say is that there is no fixed salary for influencers. Earning is based on the project, and it varies

a lot, so there are no any universal quotes. The only thing certain is that as stronger your influence gets, the better opportunities will you unlock.

Here are some ideas on how you can monetize your influence:

Opportunity to speak at the conferences/workshops/seminars

Depending on your niche, conferences or seminars could be a great way for you to hold a lecture or a speech about a topic of your interest or something that your audience will find relevant.

You will get this opportunity based on your influence and expertise, but you will also get an opportunity to expand your reach and perhaps interact with people who still are not familiar with your work. Also, you can get paid to participate in such events.

Opportunity to work with brands

Working with brands opens up so many exciting opportunities for influencers. Influencers rarely have anything else to monetize apart from their reputation, and one of the most common ways to do so is by working with brands. Their collaborations can include many different projects depending on the niche and type of the company. Some of those include creating products with the influencer's name, opportunity to appear in the commercials, creating content for the brand, etc.

Opportunity to work with other influencers

This opportunity is not precisely a way to monetize your influence, but it certainly is a way to expand your influence and thus indirectly increase the chances you can get from influencer marketing.

Collaboration among influencers is a good way for both parties to help each other with increasing their visibility. They can do so by creating collaborative content, participating in events together, creating an exclusive meetup, etc.

The bottom line is that this way of making money online is not a quick strategy to get rich and famous. Although you might get rich and famous, it will not happen that fast, and it will not happen without hard work. Therefore, think carefully if this is the career you want to choose. Try to think about some of these questions:

- Are you willing to invest that much time and persistence in creating the relationship with your online audience?

- Are you truly so dedicated to your goals that you will endure even if you come across a slow start?

- Finally, are you a person who will stand in the spotlight and be prepared for all the opportunities that come with such a career?

These are some questions you need to answer to figure out if this is what you want to do online, or you will focus on other strategies for making money online.

10

Affiliate Marketing

10. Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing is a type of online marketing which has been recognized as one of the leading factors that drive e-commerce sales. It is a part of online marketing, which means you can use this strategy together with other online strategies to make money online. For example, starting your own blog enables you to monetize it in many different ways, one of which is affiliate marketing.

Like with any of these strategies, you will need to understand the basics to be able to determine how this could help you and how this can be to your benefit.

https://www.pexels.com/photo/top-view-photography-of-smartphones-and-papers-on-white-surface-926987/

Affiliate marketing is a performance-based marketing. It is a strategy that is based on tracking the performance and enabling you to earn income this way.

Merchants and affiliates

There are two principal roles in affiliate marketing. Firstly, there are merchants. These are individuals who have a product or service they need to promote. In order to do so, they create affiliate programs where the affiliates can join. The purpose of these affiliate programs is to allow potential affiliates to get the tools needed to promote the products and services on behalf of the merchants. Merchants are also called advertisers and they usually provide material necessary for the promotion, which includes banners, images, product/service description, and most importantly, affiliate links.

On the other hand, there are affiliates who search for interesting affiliate programs to join. Affiliates, also known as publishers, are individuals who are interested in monetizing their online presence by featuring the affiliate links.

In a nutshell, the whole process looks like this.

You will be a publisher (also called affiliate) and your goal will be to find merchants (advertisers) you want to work with. Using special links that track clicks, you will promote the products on your blog on behalf of the merchant. Each time a sale is registered through one of your links, you will be given a percentage of that sales price. The income affiliates can earn represent the percentage of the sales price. This is why this type of marketing is also called performance-based marketing. If your blog is successful, you will generate more traffic and you will maximize the income through affiliate links. Once featured on your blog, these links will keep bringing income from the sales you manage to generate, for as long as your deal with the merchant is active.

When it comes to merchants, this arrangement is even better for them, as they do not need to invest in promotion and they do not have pay affiliates in advance.

Since the topic of this ebook is focused on making money online, we will explore affiliate marketing from the point of view of an affiliate.

What do you need to become an affiliate?

As an affiliate, you will look for available affiliate programs to join. In order to be accepted into an affiliate program, you will need to fill in an application form and go through the approval process. This application usually includes:

- You name
- Company name
- Email address

- Website

- Social media accounts

- Country

Other details might include questions about your company, such as size and the number of employees. The goal with all these questions is for a merchant to assess whether or not you are a good fit for their campaign.

It is important to have in mind that merchants are usually cautious when choosing affiliates because there are affiliates that might damage their reputation. Also, some merchants have a specific target group or a region they are targeting, which means there could be additional criteria when approving someone's application to become an affiliate. For example, if they believe that your target group does not match theirs enough, this might be the reason to turn you down.

Since this whole process works only if you have a way of reaching online users, you will also need to have an online presence and relationship with customers.

Here is an example of an application for an affiliate program.

Refer and Earn!

30% Lifetime Commissions On Your Referrals

First Name *

Last Name *

Email *

Paypal Email *

Company

Street *

City *

State *

Zip *

Country *

Method of Promotion *

Your Website *

EARN REWARDS

Sign up today and start earning commissions with Teachable.

We're going to ask you for some information so we can file all required federal paperwork.

Please email us at **affiliates@teachable.com** if you have any questions.

Thank you for your interest in joining our program - we're looking forward to working with you!

https://teachable.com/affiliates

At times, you will find affiliate programs that are hosted on a particular affiliate network, in which case you will need to become a member of the network to join.

Rakuten Marketing — Publisher Registration

Company Info

Country	Please Select
Legal Entity Type	Please Select ❓
Business Name (Your Name If None)	
Social Security Number	
Tax Form	Please Select — What's this?

☐ I am exempt from backup withholding

➕ Add another tax ID

Address 1	
Address 2 (Optional)	
City	
Postal Code	
Phone	

LinkShare is legally required to collect W-8/W-9 tax information in order to process and issue your commission payments. Please click for more information . Please verify that the information is accurate. If you have questions regarding which tax form to select, please refer to a qualified tax advisor or visit the IRS website at www.irs.gov

Contact & Account Info

First Name	
Last Name	
Email	
Security Question	Please Select
Answer	

Username	
	Up to 12 characters
Password	
	8 to 12 characters with at least 2 numbers and 2 letters
Confirm Password	

https://www.udemy.com/affiliate/

How to find affiliate programs to join?

General tips when starting out with affiliate marketing and in need of finding programs to join include:

- Choose a brand you want to work with and explore if they offer an affiliate program

- Join affiliate networks to get the opportunity of browsing affiliate programs

- Start with Amazon and eBay affiliate programs that provide quite a diverse selection of products to promote

Also, be selective when it comes to joining affiliate programs. Consider all the details such as the percentage of commission, the cookie lifetime, and other restrictions or requirements.

How to know if the program is right for you?

There are so many affiliate programs online, and as you start exploring at times, you might even be torn regarding which programs to choose. Here are some essential questions to answer whether the affiliate program is good for you.

- Does this program includes promoting a product/service your target audience will benefit from/find useful/like/ appreciate?
- Does this program enable you to monetize your influence/blog enough?
- Is this a strategy that will give results?
- Does the merchant have a good reputation?
- Does the merchant offer benefits such as help with setting up the campaign, a progressive increase of commission, etc.?

All of these could be deciding factors when evaluating a particular program, considering whether or not to join, or even comparing the two programs.

The final idea is that you want to use this strategy only if it is profitable. Unless you see any conversions, you are just flooding your blog with useless links. Always try to promote the products that are really relevant to your target group.

A positive aspect of this strategy is the fact that you will not have to make much effort about this. You already have a blog, you already have content where you can place affiliate links. Of course, you will be creating more content, and the content strategy can be influenced by affiliate marketing and the type of products you will be promoting. Again, your reputation is something you need to consider as a deciding factor when choosing to work or not to work with specific merchants.

Also, to increase the performance of the affiliate links featured on your blog, you will need to invest more in your blog promotion and online exposure.

11

Using YouTube to Make Money Online

11. Using YouTube to Make Money Online

The main premise of this opportunity to make money online is that you make videos. If you are into video content, YouTube can be one of the leading platforms to explore in terms of earning revenue for such content.

Firstly, a lot will depend on your community, i.e., the number of subscribers. Growing your audience is the crucial task for you if you want to make a successful career out of YouTube. However, having millions of subscribers is not essential for earning money on YouTube. In fact, you can start making money on YouTube with much less subscribers. The number of subscribers is not the only metric that matters. YouTube takes into account other metrics, such as engagement level, your stats in comparison to other YouTubers in your niche, etc. Still growing your subscriber list consistently is undoubtedly helpful in gradually increasing your potential income.

Think about content first

The content you create needs to be created with your audience in mind. It needs to create trust, encourage engagement and be something your audience will love to watch (and come back for more).

Try to come up with a plan for each video.

- Start with writing a script
- Plan how the whole video will look like
- Create a budget (for example, if you need to buy props for the video)
- Use the best equipment you have (or try investing in new equipment) to shoot better quality videos
- Focus enough time on video editing

Creating a YouTube channel

Having a Google channel enables you to comment and share on YouTube, but this does not automatically mean that you are creating YouTube channel along with your Google account. To create your YouTube channel, you should:

- Visit https://www.youtube.com/
- Click on "Sign in" in the top right corner

- A new window will be opened where you will add your Google account email or phone

You will be taken back to YouTube homepage, but this time instead of *"Sign in"* button you will see a circle with your photo (or place to add your photo).

- Click on your photo

- Find the option *"YouTube setting"*

- A new window will be opened where you can use the option *"Create a channel"*

When creating a YouTube channel, there will be a couple of options for you to add information to complete the whole process. Firstly, you will be able to choose the channel name. It can be your own name, a business name, or some other name.

The next step includes choosing a category for your channel. Also, you will notice that a new Google+ page will automatically be created for your brand.

Once your YouTube channel is created, you should use a couple of options to customize it.
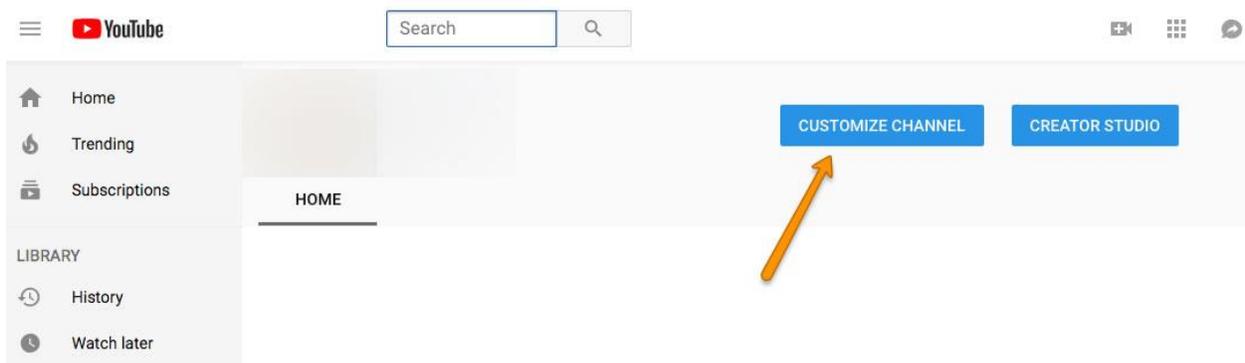
- Add channel art - Channel art is a banner visible at the top of your YouTube channel.
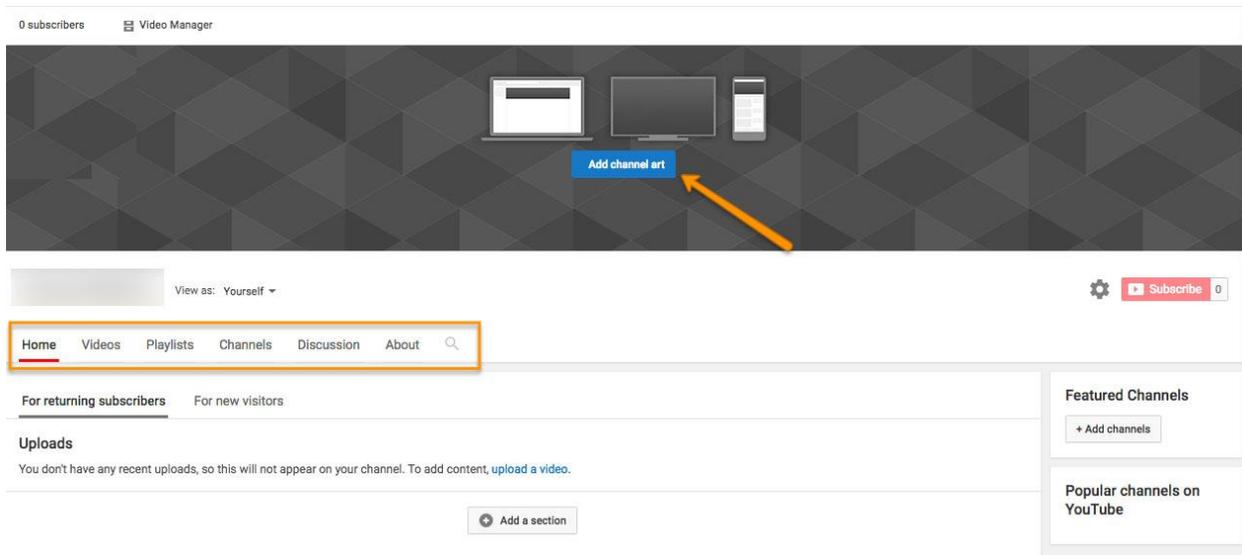
- Add channel icon - This icon is shown next to your videos.

- Customization - Use the available options to explore other features you can use to customize your channel

- About - This section enables you to add channel description and links, such as URL link, social media profiles, etc.
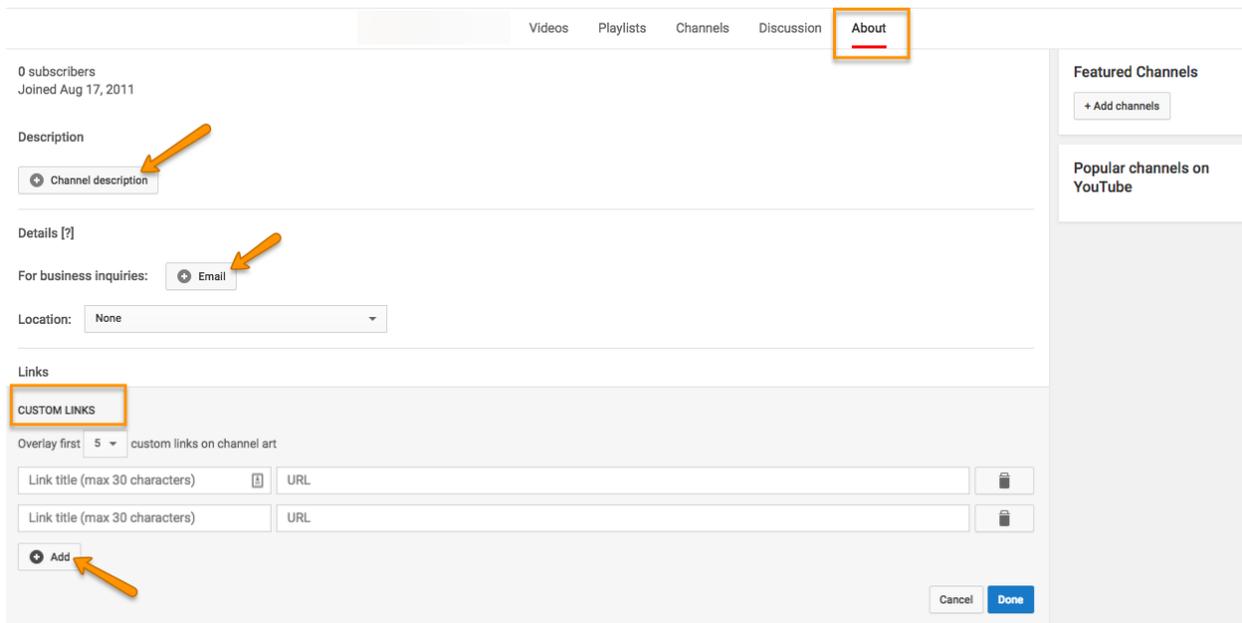
Here is how one brand YouTube channel looks like when optimized using the options above.
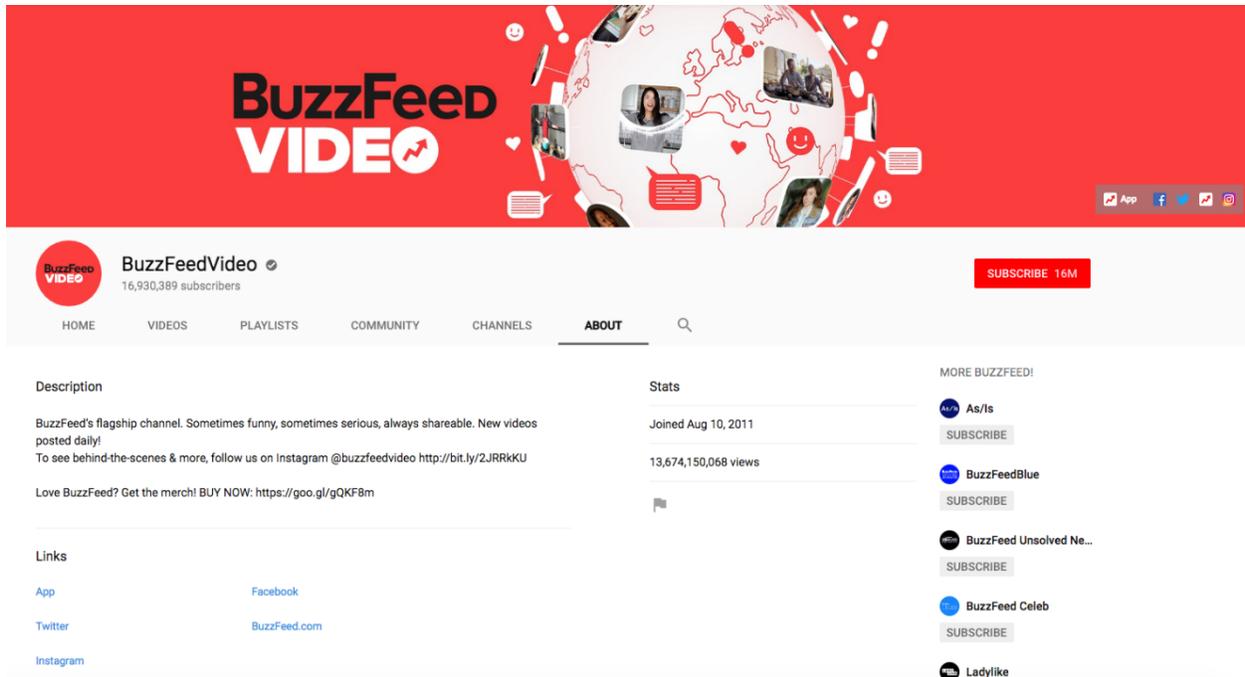
Start creating content that brings views

Even though there are no universal figures regarding money-making opportunities, what is safe to say is that improving your numbers (number of subscribers, views, comments, etc.) is the best way to succeed with YouTube.

To achieve that, you will need great quality content. Here are some general ideas to have in mind when creating content:

- Make your content about something you know a lot about, something you are interested in, etc.

- Explore your audience and find out how to create content that directly addresses them

- Share original ideas and concepts that will help you stand out

- Collaborate with other YouTubers to increase exposure and gain extra experience

Enable monetization

Monetization is a program on YouTube that enables you to make money through your videos. Essentially, you enable YouTube to place ads in a different format in your video. Ad formats include:

- Display ads - These ads are placed next to the video, on the right, above the suggestion list.

- Overlay ads - A semi-transparent box is displayed over 20% of your video with the ad.

- Skippable video ads - Video ads inserted before, during or after the video. Users can skip them after 5 seconds.

- Non-skippable video ads - Video ads inserted before, during or after the video. Users cannot skip these video. There is a length limit for these videos, up to 15 or 20 seconds.

- Bumper ads - Non-skippable video ads up to 6 seconds long.

- Sponsored cards - Sponsored cards of relevant ads (such as products you mention) as a part of your video.

Apart from the fact that monetization program needs to be supported in your country, other requirements include:

- 4000 watch hours in the previous 12 months
- 1000 subscribers

To enable monetization on your channel, go to the channel settings and choose the option *"Status and features"*. Find the option *"Monetization",* check if this is available for you and click *"Enable"* to start the process.

The process consists of four steps:

"1. Read and agree to the YouTube Partner Program terms

2. Sign up for AdSense

3. Set monetization preferences

*4. Get reviewed after reaching 4000 watch hours in the previous 12 months
and 1000 subscribers"*

[Source](#)

Other ways of making money on YouTube

Apart from YouTube ads, there are other ways to earn money on the network. Also, it is important to know that sometimes you can combine a couple of those monetization strategies.

YouTube Premium

YouTube Premium is a subscription-based feature where members pay a recurring fee to access the platform with benefits such as watching the videos without ads. The revenue with YouTube

Premium is calculated based on the time members spend watching your videos in comparison to other content.

Work with brands

This monetization option includes working with brands that are interested in you promoting their products or services. Brands that will be interested in this are usually the brands that have the same target audience as you.

Merchandise

Use your video content on YouTube to advertise your own products or merchandise.

Crowdfunding

Your community can help you grow your channel by donating funds to support your channel.

Affiliate marketing

If you mention products in your video, you can add an affiliate link in the video description. This way, the clicks will be tracked, and you will be able to make money for converting visitors.

With all these options, you can create success with YouTube. The most significant advantage is the fact that it is easy to start. Most well-known YouTubers, who have earned millions through the platform, actually began recording first videos in their bedrooms. Nothing fancy, no high-end equipment, no production team. Just a desire to make videos and creativity to bring this vision to life.

The greatest drawback is certainly the saturated market and the fact that you will need a lot of effort to generate first views and create a respectable name for yourself in this online community. Even so, it is a strategy that is worth testing if you are talented, charismatic and comfortable in front of the camera.

12

Teaching Online

12. Teaching Online

As you can see up to this point, there are numerous tactics to make money online, and teaching is one of those. Moreover, it is a strategy you can start as an additional job, while still keeping your full-time job. And the best of all, you do not need to have a teacher's degree to begin teaching online.

The primary distinction we will make at the beginning of this chapter is based on these two aspects.

- Online classes - Teaching students individually (usually one-on-one, sometimes teaching a group)
- Online courses - Teaching students as a part of an online course

Since these two require a different setup, we will analyze them separately. As for you, you can choose one of these strategies, or even both, depending on your preferences, how much time you have to invest in teaching and depending on your plans for the future.

Even though teaching online does not require you to have an official teacher's degree, there are some topics you will need to be pretty knowledgeable about, to be able to teach them. While some industries, such as conversation classes in your native language does not require any special skills apart from speaking fluently, you will not be able to teach someone to use Photoshop unless you know how to that. Therefore, your first step will be choosing what to teach.

Choosing your niche

In the long run, you might end up teaching a lot of various topics, but for starters, try to choose your niche. Find a subject you know a lot about and a topic that you can educate about. Whereas traditional education has its limitations, teaching online enables you to teach any skill, regardless if those skills are taught as a part official school or college curriculums.

This type of education is often called "informal education" implying that it happens outside the official curriculums. Another characteristic is that informal education is highly practical, relies on exploration and practical usage rather than learning theory. Students try to learn specific skills or concepts they are personally interested in or would need in their professional development.

Some of the niche ideas and concepts you can teach include:

- Business
- Marketing
- Web development
- Health improvement
- Photography
- Design
- Music
- Languages
- Personal development

Each of these topics can further be divided into minor sections enabling you to determine a more specific and narrow niche you want to focus on.

The main benefit of choosing a niche is the fact that if you specialize in a particular topic, you get experience in teaching it, and you also get a reputation. What may be seen as a negative aspect is the narrow target audience which limits your reach and your potential income. Still, it is better

to be recognizable as a teacher who teaches one topic exceptionally well, than to try to teach everything and achieve mediocre success.

Starting with online classes

The most significant advantage is that you will not need much to start with online classes. Here are some of the basics:

Equipment

The equipment usually includes your computer, a pair of headphones, and a stable internet connection. If your computer does not have a webcam, you will need an external camera as well. Most of these things you usually already have.

Software

The next step is choosing a web conferencing platform for hosting classes. One of the most popular is Skype.

Skype

It enables one-to-one lessons quite easily for free. On the plus side, a lot of online users already have a Skype account, so there is no need for that extra step of creating an account. Skype supports video conferencing, and with a paid account, you get access to group calls and screen sharing features.
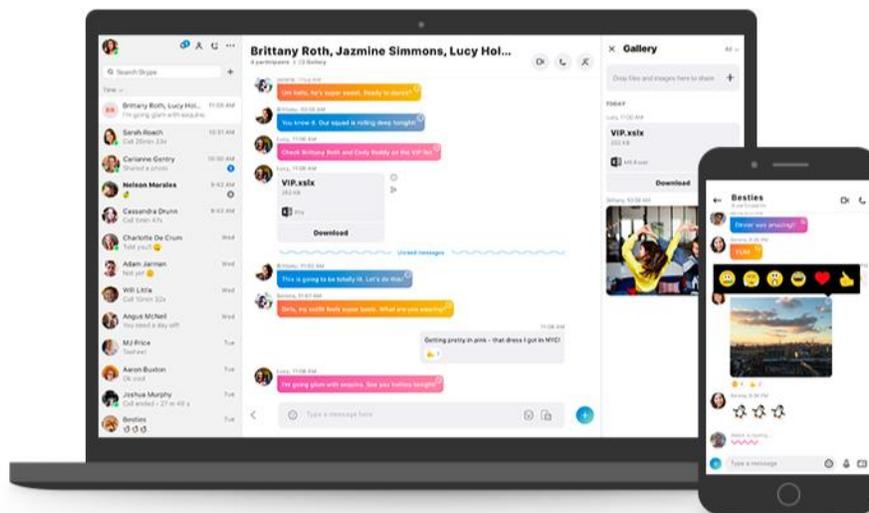
Google Hangouts

[Google Handgouts](#) is quite a straightforward tool for online communication, and the only requirement is having a Google+ account. It supports messaging, voice and video calls. It enables screen sharing, recording the hangout and some other features that can be enabled through additional apps. This software is free, with no premium plan.
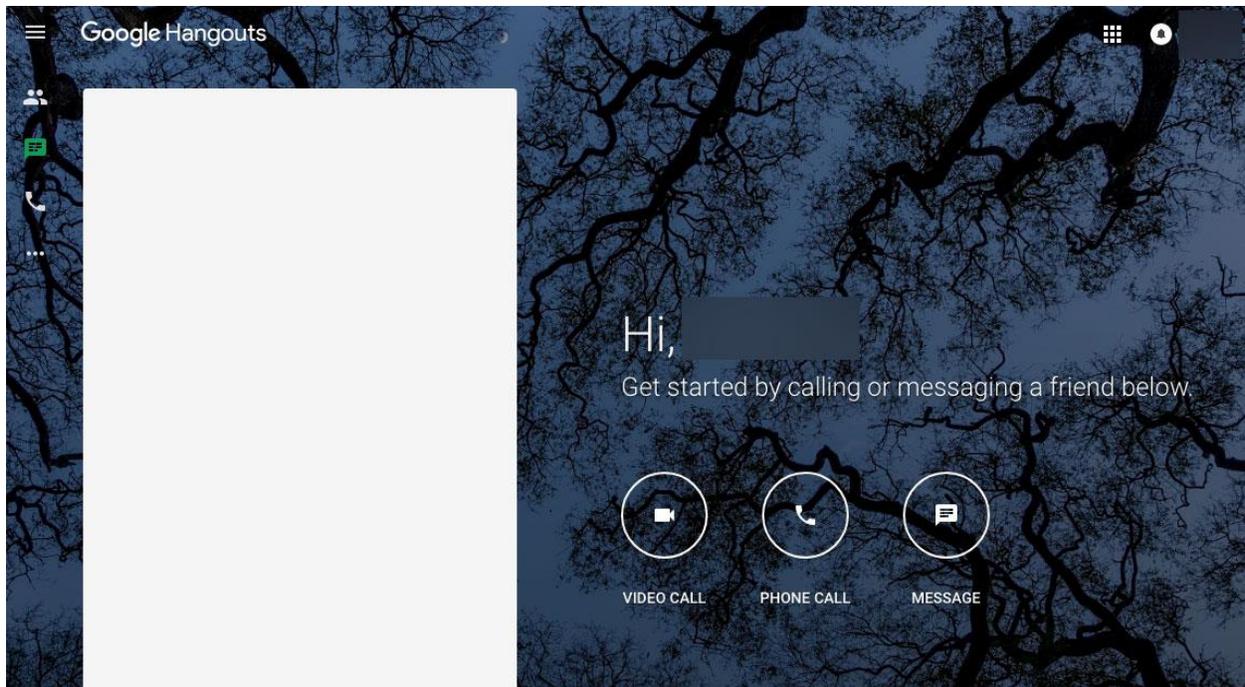
Zoom

The main advantage of [Zoom software](#) is a possibility to host HD video lessons. Unlimited one-to-one meetings and group lesson up to 40 minutes long are free, and there are three payment plans to choose from, depending on the features you want and need. The software comes with lots of exciting features such as screen sharing, active speaker view, whiteboarding, virtual background, personal rooms, etc. all which are available with a free account as well. Paid accounts are usually for businesses and support admin feature controls, custom meeting ID, vanity URL, etc. There is a mobile app too.
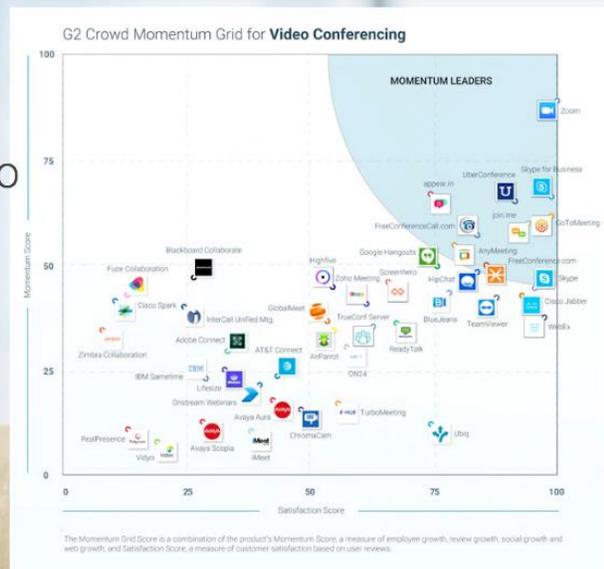
WizIQ

Unlike other tools, which are more of conference call oriented, WizIQ is a virtual classroom tool which supports features such as course builder, online whiteboard, testing, and assessments. The virtual classroom is designed to replicate the classroom experience, and it integrates into platforms such as WordPress, Moodle, Joomla, Drupal, Blackboard, etc. Analytics tools also support measuring and tracking performance. There are three payment plans which are billed annually, and there is a 14-day free trial.
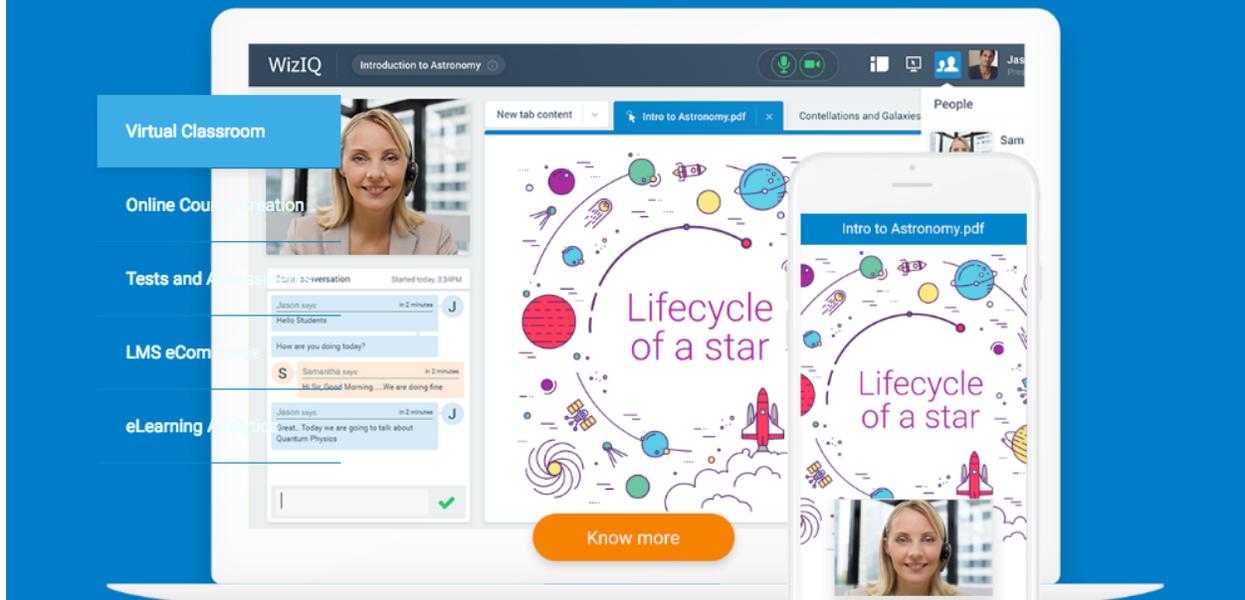
Your portfolio

You will need to advertise your services to online users, and here are a couple of ways to do so:

- Have your own website/blog
- Use social networks
- Join online communities and forums (such as [Quora](#))
- Sign up for freelancing platforms to look for opportunities

Pros and cons of online classes

When choosing between the two ways to teach online, starting with online classes is definitely easier and quicker way to go. Here is why:

No full-time commitment

You can do this job as a part-time gig, and you never really have to commit to it full time. When you find students to teach, you can agree upon the number of classes per week. You only accept the number of students you are comfortable to teach. For example, if you want to have one class every day (five days a week) you will need enough students to fill in those slots. And you will not look further.

Flexible hours

With online classes, your hours will be very flexible. Even though the great thing about this is that you can arrange your work day and choose when you want to work, you will still be working with students who also have schedules of their own. Essentially, you will need to adapt to their schedule if you want to teach them. This can sometimes be difficult to organize, especially when you have students from the different part of the world who are in different time zones.

No mandatory curriculum

Teaching online classes offers more flexibility in terms of having a curriculum. Although it is recommended to have a study plan and some general ideas about how you want to structure your classes, in essence, you will not need to create entire course content.

Using other available resources

In fact, you will probably use some available resources in your classes. Rather than creating teaching resources, you could use a textbook or other resources available to you. A great benefit of this approach is that you already have materials organized and structured, and with minor adaptations, you can use them with your students. Also, this gives you more freedom in finding new materials and adapting your classes to each student.

This way of teaching also comes with some disadvantages such as:

A limited number of hours

This does not necessarily have to mean that the income is lower than when teaching courses. What it means is that the number of hours you work limits your income. Just multiply the hours you can spend teaching with your hourly price, and you will get the maximum income you can make. With online courses, you do not have such a limitation.

More time for preparation

Unlike courses, where everyone follows the same program, online classes are usually more demanding regarding the time you need to plan and organize each class. It does get easier in time, and you will get the hang of it, but in the beginning, you will need to invest more time into preparation. Try optimizing the preparation time by teaching students who are at the same level. In this case, you could use the same lesson multiple times.

Customization of the program per student

When working with students individually, there is a need to adapt each lesson to that particular student. Students who choose individual classes are usually unable to follow the group programs, due to their limited time, or difficulties they might face when learning. Therefore, if you want to have success with students and help them make progress, you will need to adapt your lessons. This might require more time and effort when preparing for the class than it does when creating a single course instead.

Starting with online courses

Choosing to go for online courses is a better option if you are going to turn teaching in your full-time career. This kind of teaching method enables you to reach more people and get more students. With online classes, teachers usually have a couple of students, whereas as those teaching online courses can have thousands of students.

It is also important to note that teaching with online courses demands more management and organization, which you will see through these essential things you will need to start with online courses.

Equipment

Like with teaching classes, you will need a computer, a microphone, a pair of headphones and a stable internet connection. You will probably need equipment for recording lessons which can either be in audio or video format. You could go for written-only lessons, but having visual/audio content is always a bit more engaging, more personal and ultimately more professional.

Software

Once you have the equipment, you will need to choose a software you will use for hosting courses. There are a variety of options, a possibility to choose hosted solutions, with less management, or even create a completely custom platform. It is best to do the research and

select the solution that is perfect for you in terms of convenience, costs, and possibilities for upgrades and growth.

Hosted solutions

A hosted solution means that you will be creating courses on a third-party platform. This option is easier and quicker, but it comes with recurring costs. Each platform usually takes a certain percentage of each sale. Still, another great benefit is the fact that these platforms already have students and you will get instant visibility for your courses even if you have just started teaching.

[Teachable](#)

This is an online teaching community with millions of students worldwide. The platform supports features such as customizable sales pages, creating coupons, promotions and even your affiliate program. You can accept international payments. There are three payment plans for using this platform for teaching, billed monthly or annually.
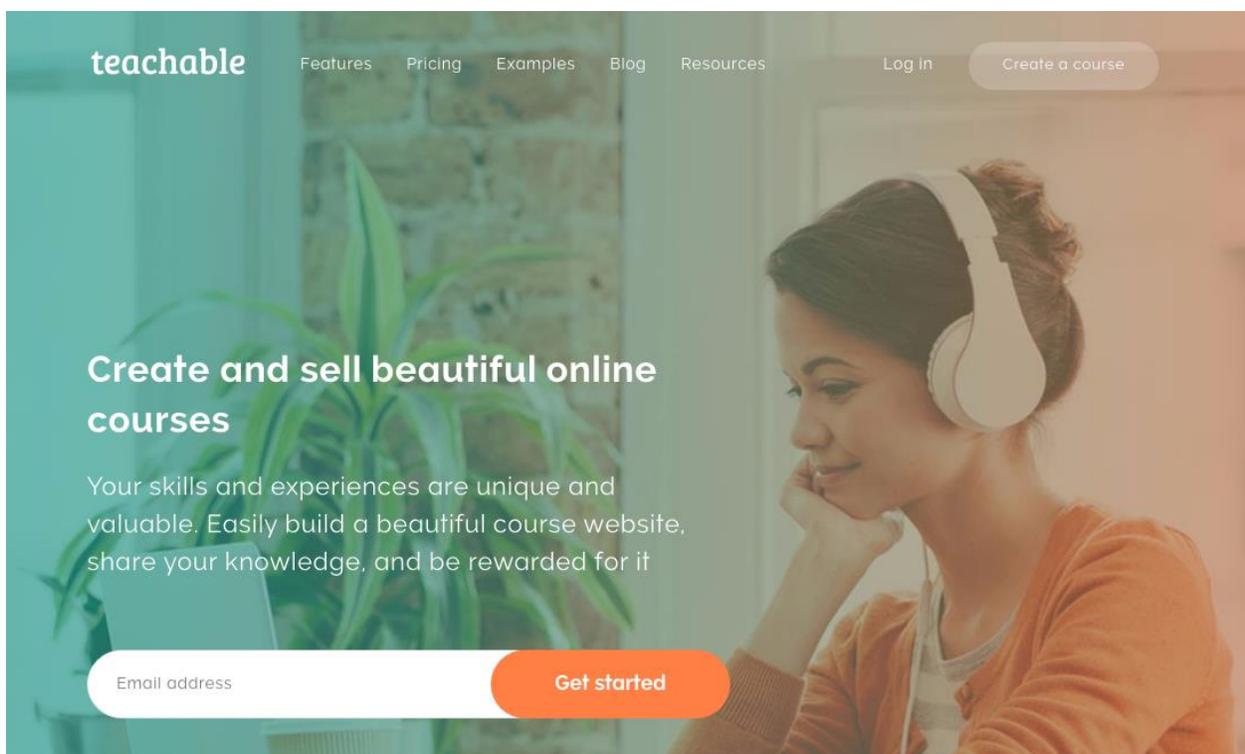
[Udemy](#)

It is one of the most popular hosted platforms. It is completely free to use and host courses on the platform. Udemy takes the percent of the payment once the sale is completed. Depending on the traffic source, the revenue is divided between the teacher, Udemy, and affiliates (if they are the ones that drove the sale). Udemy reports having over 12 million students.

[Thinkific](#)

The platform supports creating courses with drag and drop features, embedding multimedia content, customization features, as well as marketing and analytic tools to monitor your performance. Thinkific offers a free plan with 10% transaction fee and access to core features. Premium plans come with lower (or no) transaction fee and more advanced options to run your online teaching business.

[SkillShare](#)

The platform hosts online courses enabling you access to their creation tools. Once your content is uploaded, you get access to your channel where you start interacting with the students. You are paid based on the number of students who attend your classes.
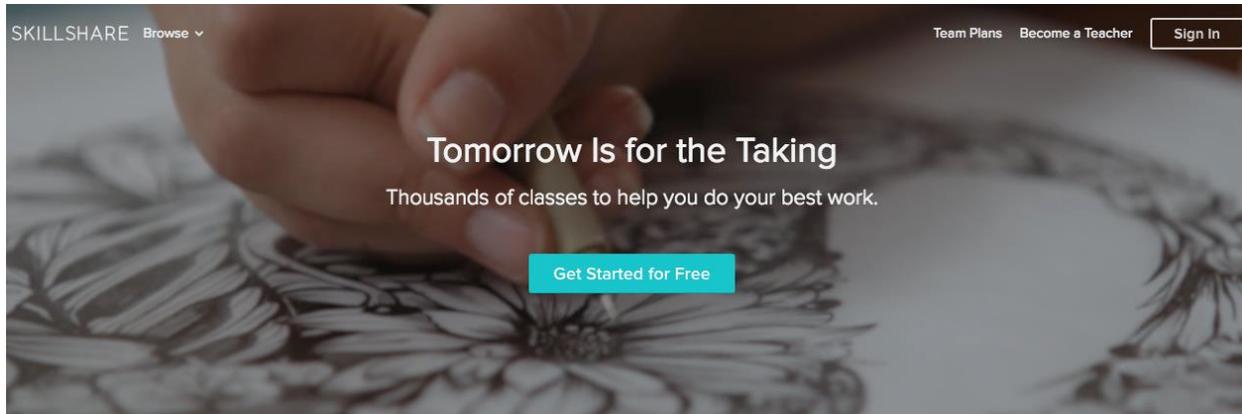
Self-hosted solutions

Even though hosted teaching platforms come with a lot of perks and might be a good choice for beginners or those who plan on teaching part-time, the option of a self-hosted platform to host your courses could be a better alternative. It provides more flexibility, independence, and customization, but it also comes with more time needed for management and maintenance. Some of the popular self-hosted platforms include:

Moodle

This one is perhaps the most popular platform for hosting online courses. The platform itself is a free online learning management system, with customizable features and regular upgrades. It is customizable, it offers lots of different activities, and it is intuitive, so people find it easy to use this kind of a system. Also, you will find lots of add-ons and features for this platform, both paid and free, to add and enhance its features.

[JoomlaLMS](#)

JoomlaLMS is a multi-language interface for creating online courses. It provides course builder, supports most important file formats, customization options, managing access levels, etc. Besides creating quizzes and questions, the platform offers communication tools, such as announcement, email notifications, forum, course chat, calendar, etc. Besides learning management, the platform also integrates with payment systems, automatically creates invoices, create coupon codes, as well as a subscription option. It is a paid platform with the 30-day free trial.

LearnDash

This is a WordPress premium plugin which enables you to create online courses with intelligent course builder, advanced quiz types, forums, course points, certificates, and badges. It supports subscriptions, one-time purchases, memberships as well as course bundles. It is mobile friendly and includes plenty of management features and reporting. There are three payment plans, depending on the number of sites you want to use it for and depending on the features you get. You can also try out demo version to see how the platform looks like.

[Sensei](#)

Here is another WordPress plugin to create courses, lessons, and quizzes. Even though the number of features is fewer than with other platforms, the company behind it enjoys excellent influence in the WordPress community. The plugin was introduced by the company behind WooCommerce, one of the most popular e-commerce plugins for WordPress. There are three payment plans depending on the number of sites you will be using the plugin for.

Advantages and disadvantages of teaching online courses

When considering teaching, you should have in mind the advantages and disadvantages that this career comes with.

Working with lots of students

Unlike teaching individual students, hosting course enables you to work with hundreds and thousands of students worldwide. If you want to grow your career in this industry and grow your business, this is undoubtedly an advantage to have in mind. You can still do one-on-one classes when you want. However, courses can help you turn this into more of a passive income because the students can join whenever they want and study more independently.

Easier student monitoring and management

When starting an online course, you will be using a platform to present all the learning materials, exercises, assignments, etc. Regardless if you choose a hosted or self-hosted platform, most of them will come with monitoring and tracking features so you can keep up with student's progress.

No limited income

When you create a course, you provide learning materials for your students. You do not have to be online 24/7 but your course will, which means you can work with much more students that with one-on-one classes. This is why your income is not limited by a few students you can work with at the same time.

Following a specific curriculum

Again, courses are more productive sort of teaching, as you invest time into creating a curriculum, which you later follow with all the other students. Even though you might be updating the course content occasionally, you will probably not redesign everything and make drastic changes to the curriculum.

More flexibility

Besides flexible income and number of students, there is another level of flexibility you should have in mind. Your work day will be much flexible. Unless you schedule specific group activities or maybe live classes, you can work at any time during the day. This is such a fantastic advantage, as you will have more freedom to organize your day and work when it is convenient.

Outsourcing

Outsourcing enables you to hire people and distribute work on your course. The main goal is to get more things done in less time. Also, you might be able to find people who are more experienced and have more knowledge to help you with improving your course.

Still, the approach comes with a few drawbacks. Here are some of the most obvious ones:

More time to prepare

You will not be able to start making money immediately with this strategy. You will need time to create the course (or courses) and this can take from a couple of weeks to a couple of months. Have in mind that the course needs to be well-designed, presented and proofread to make the best first impression and get good reviews. The amount of time needed to create one course depends on the topic you are working on. Whether you are working alone or you have assistance is also another factor that will determine the period of preparation needed.

Responsibility to create original curriculum and content

You will need to focus on this as one of the most important tasks in teaching. Your curriculum must be your idea, featuring original content or content that is not protected by copyright.

Initial investment

As you have seen, starting to teach online courses, requires some preparation. Here are some things you will need to invest in:

- Course creation - Starting from investing your time, to outsourcing content creation, this is the initial investment you will face.

- Software - The next cost is setting up the platform for hosting courses. Teaching platforms might require payment, and you also might need help from a developer or a designer, or any other specialized professional that will help you make your course available.

- Course promotion - Finally, when everything is up and running you will need to promote your course. If you are promoting through your blog or social network organic reach, this will only require your time, but you might also want to explore the possibilities of paid advertising.

More time for management

When your course is live, and you have students enrolled, you will need to spend some time dealing with management. This step does not exist with classes, because there is nothing much to manage, except your schedule. With online courses, you will have a platform to manage. This includes tracking the progress of active students, answering their questions, reviewing their assignments, you will also need to moderate forums if those exist. If you have a self-hosted platform, you will need to take care of regular updates, security, etc.

The bottom line is that teaching online has a lot of potential to help you make money, either way you choose to teach. It is worth knowing that:

> *"E-Learning Market size was estimated at over USD 150 billion in 2016 and is predicted to grow at over 5% CAGR from 2017 to 2024." ([Source](#))*

Obviously, there is interest, and online education provides a lot of benefits for students. The main thing you need to remember is that quality is essential, and the more quality education you can provide, the better you will be at making this a profitable career.

13

Become a writer

13. Become a writer

If you are a kind of person who prefers staying out of the spotlight and transferring the ideas into words, becoming a writer might be the right career for you. Other than your skill and passion for writing, you will not need much to get started.

This is a career that has traditionally been available to only a few people, but with widespread usage of the internet, anyone can become a writer, without much of an investment. Of course, like with most of these jobs, you realize that reputation is everything. That is the only way to ensure that you continually make money online through the career of your choice.

https://www.pexels.com/photo/hands-coffee-cup-apple-5199/

What will you need?

For starters, you will need the skill. The main requirement is that you are good at writing.

Writing

You need to be able to convey your ideas correctly and in an engaging way. You also need to know the language you are writing in. Regardless if that is your native language or the language you speak fluently, when writing you need to know how to express yourself correctly, how to format the sentences, how to create this sort of fluency for your readers. Your ideas need to be organized.

Research

The second skill you will need is being able to research and find the information you need. When you write about something you are familiar with, the process of writing is much quicker and smoother. However, most writers sometimes have to write about something they might not be quite familiar with. In this case, they need to be able to find trustworthy information and learn the topic themselves to be able to write about it.

Environment

Next, you will need an environment that helps you concentrate and stay focused on the work. For some, it is listening to music, some prefer writing outdoors, etc. If you are working from home, it is good to have your special place for writing, preferably one that allows you to isolate from the rest of the family and thus avoid any distractions.

Software

Finally, you will need software for writing. There are a lot of tools you can use for this purpose, and here are some of the most popular:

- [Word](#) - Offline tool for text editing with lots of options for formatting, creating layouts, table of contents, templates, etc.
- [Google Docs](#) - An online tool for creating text files, with predesigned formatting options for headings, but plenty of tools for customization, add-ons, and even templates.
- [Apple dictation](#) - The tool is a built-in feature of a Mac computer enabling you to convert the spoken words into text. It is very helpful when you have loads of ideas but cannot type quite fast enough.
- [Bear writer](#) - An online app that allows you to quickly access your work from any device and keep everything organized.

- [BlankPage](#) - It is a subscription service that helps you write more, offering guidance, help, and motivation during the process of writing. It helps you set goals, continue work from any device, etc.

- [Hemingway App](#) - This tool shows you hints on how to improve your writing, and it is primarily focused on style. While showing alternatives and possible confusing parts, the tool helps you make your text more readable.

- [Grammarly](#) - It is a tool that helps you improve writing by highlighting grammatical, spelling, and style mistakes. The tool also suggests one or several alternatives for enhancing your vocabulary.

- [ProWritingAid](#) - This editing tool helps you with grammar, style issues, and improve your writing with tools such as word explorer and contextual thesaurus.

Some of the types of content you can create as a writer include:

- Blog articles
- Landing pages
- Copywriting
- Ebooks
- Books
- Stories

Publishing independently

The first option is to work for yourself. You will publish the work under your name, and you will directly regulate sales. Working this way offers lots of flexibility and independence, but it also comes with more responsibility and management for making your content available, promoting it, etc. You will have more freedom when it comes to choosing the topics you write about, your style, etc.

Monetization opportunities include selling your content on online platforms (such as [Amazon](#) and [Smashwords](#)) or creating your online shop where you would sell your writing. A great benefit of publishing your work independently is the possibility to earn passive income. If you have evergreen content, or for example, if you write fiction, you will spend some time writing, but earn from that work in the years to come. This is how you create a steady source of passive income.

Working for others

When it comes to working for others, this comes with more assurance as you will get paid once the work is done. Usually, when you work for clients, they have a specific topic they want you to write about, and sometimes they even provide the exact title.

With this kind of work, you will avoid publishing, management, and promotion of your work. The main drawback is that you will continuously have to work. You cannot transform this into a passive income. Once you complete the writing for the client and get paid, the client receives the rights to your content. So if any sale comes from your work in the future, it will be your client's earning.

Where to find jobs?

If you choose to go for independent work, you will use one of the platforms that support selling digital products (Chapter 3) or your own online shop.

On the other hand, if you want to look for clients offering opportunities for writers, here are some commonly used places:

Cold emailing

The process of cold email including contacting brands or companies directly and offering your services as a writer. You can choose the brands you would be interested in, and this might help you find great gigs.

ProBlogger Job Board

ProBlogger gathers a large community of bloggers and those interested in using blogging in their business. The job board represents a section for companies to advertise their job opening and find writers anywhere in the world.

Freelancing platforms

Platforms such as Upwork, Freelancer, and People Per Hour offer a lot of opportunities to find writing jobs. Through these platforms, you build your experience and reputation, which eventually helps you raise your rates. A lot of writers report that the rates they get on freelancing platforms are significantly lower than industry standards and comparing to the gigs they could get otherwise. Access to the large directory of open jobs and the fact that your payments are usually protected and guaranteed are some of the reasons why writers still prefer handling all the work through the freelancing platforms.

LinkedIn

The social network enables you to create an outstanding profile and show off your skills, while you also get a chance to keep up with new writing gigs.

ConstantContent

The platform [Constant Content](#) offers writing services and hires writers to work in their team. To get this job opportunity, you will need to go through the application process and be approved.

This is the quick list to get you started, but as you begin exploring the field, you will see that there will be many more opportunities to cash in on your writing skills.

14

Exploring Websites That Pay for Specific Tasks

14. Exploring Websites That Pay for Specific Tasks

Most of these ideas you have seen here could turn into a prosperous business and a career for you to make money online. Regardless if you choose to work part-time or full time, there are so many possibilities. However, if you do not have enough skill to work any of those, or you want a quick gig to earn some money online, this is where you will find some creative ideas.

Did you even know that there is a job called mystery shopper? Well, there is, and keep on reading this chapter to find out more.

https://www.pexels.com/photo/woman-using-space-gray-iphone-x-1043506/
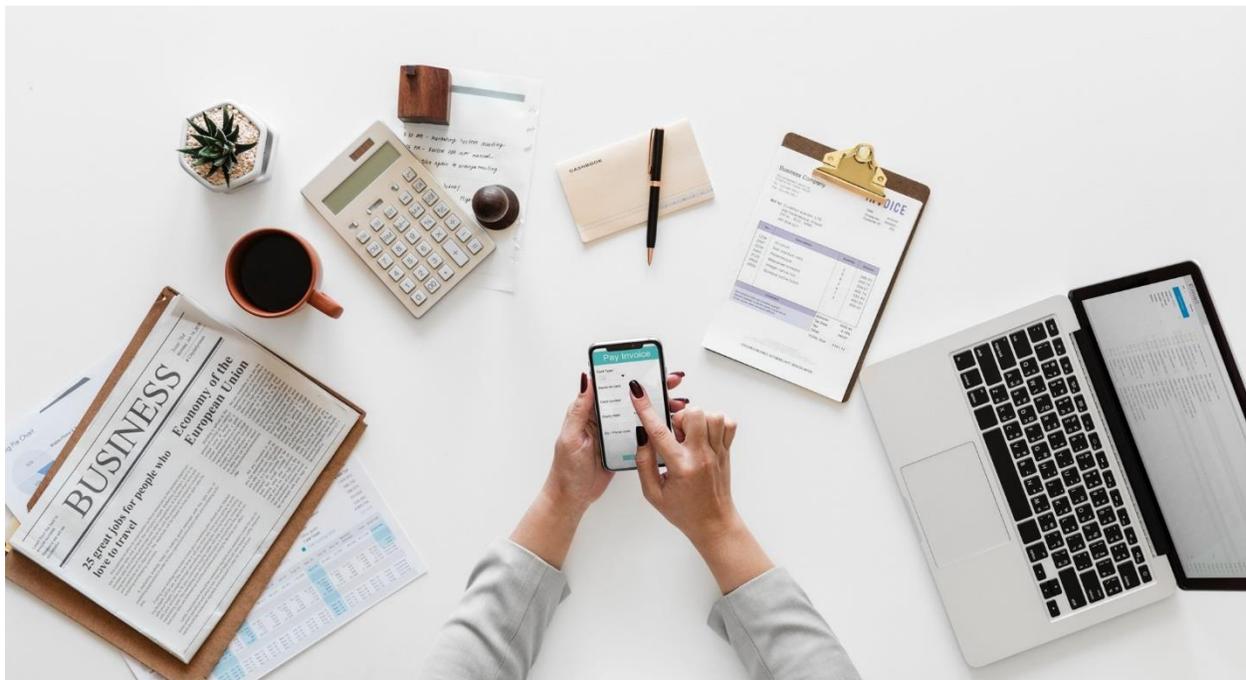
Do surveys

Here is a very popular career for making money online. All you need to do is register, and once your account is approved you can complete online paid surveys.

- [MySurvey](#) - A very popular site that pays up to $5 per survey, depending on the survey length and urgency.

- [Toluna](#) - The site offers you to become Toluna influencer and complete surveys that help major brands when designing and refining their products. Primarily get points by completing surveys, which you can redeem for gift cards or cash.
- [i-Say](#) - An online survey community that enables you to share oppinions and feedback regarding the products you use every day. By earning points, you get access to rewards which include gift vouchers.
- [SurveyBods](#) - Fill in the surveys and earn prizes or cash with this online service. Active members also participate in prize draws every month.

Do various online tasks

Besides surveys, you can do other tasks online and here are some of those:

- [Amazon Mechanical Turk](#) - The platform enables companies to enlist tasks that require human intelligence and cannot be automated. Usually, the tasks include identifying objects (photo or video), transcription, research, categorizing information, etc.
- [Swagbucks](#) - Swagbucks is a website that works as a reward program. You shop online in your favorite stores, such as Amazon, Walmart, Target, and over 1500 other retailers, do online surveys, watch videos, sign up for new services, search the web, play games, and similar activities. You collect points, which you can redeem for free gift cards, or get cash.
- [Stylinity](#) - If you love taking selfies, use the Stylinity StylePerks™ and tag the brands you are wearing. You can earn points, which can be redeemed for cash, exclusive experience or products.
- [UserTesting](#) - The platform offers opportunities to test websites and apps. You will need to complete a set of tasks, record a video sharing your thoughts on the experience and get paid $10.

Get paid when you buy

Even though it sounds sketchy, it really works. Your only goal is to buy products, take a photo of the receipt and earn money. Here are a couple of services to check out:

- [BerryCart](#) - The service awards you for buying and taking the photo of the receipt of organic, gluten-free and non-GMO foods.
- [Checkout51](#) - Use their app to take advantage of offers, take a photo of the receipt which will prove how many offers you have used. You then get credit to your account, which you can use when you earn more than $20.
- [ReceiptPal](#) - With this service, you do not have to buy specific products. All you need is to take photo of the receipt, upload it and earn credit which can be redeemed for awards such as gift cards.
- [Shopmium](#) - With this app, you select offers and buy those products at your nearby store. You earn by sending the photo of the receipt to confirm the purchase.

Name a business

If you are creative and want to share this creativity, join the websites that help brands come up with business names. If your proposal gets picked, you earn a reward, which can vary depending on the service.

- [Naming Force](#) - The website hosts name contests where you can participate by submitting your name suggestion.
- [Squadhelp](#) - You can submit a name, slogan or logo for the contest run on this platform and earn badges and points. Typically, those who win the contest can earn between $100 and $300.

Become a mystery shopper

Mystery shoppers are hired by the companies to test their customer service. Companies that hire such individuals are focused on providing a perfect customer experience, so your goal is to shop and then report on your experience. You help companies to improve their customer shopping experience and in return, you get paid or receive compensations in the form of gift cards, free purchases, etc.

- [MarketForce](#) - When you become a mystery shopper, your goal will be to buy products you usually do, such as groceries, clothing, even to eat out, etc. In return for your work you receive shopper payment and/or free purchases or meals, depending on the brand you work for.

- [BestMark](#) - Here is another mystery shopping service which allows you to find opportunities to earn money while shopping.

Make money by losing weight

Not only will this encourage you to stay on track with your plan to lose weight, but you can actually earn money by changing your life for the better. Here are some opportunities:

- [DietBet](#) - Join the games with one of the three dietbet formats and bet on how much weight you are going to lose.

- [HeathyWage](#) - While on the journey of losing weight, join challenges available on this platform and win bets.

When looking for these jobs, it is very important to carefully analyze whether the company is legitimate. You should read About us section, terms of use, maybe even check social profiles. Have in mind that there are scams and some of these jobs are perfect for pulling those off. For example, mystery shopping is particularly targeted, as you are required to buy the product to be able to participate and earn your income. You will find more about common scams and how to avoid them in chapter 16.

15

Best Practices for Making Money Online

15. Best Practices for Making Money Online

It is evident that you will find a lot of different opportunities to make money online. Regardless of your knowledge, experience, availability, there are so many choices, that you will surely find a career that will be suitable for you. In fact, if you keep up with the technology, soon you might even come across other exciting possibilities.

https://www.pexels.com/photo/two-person-shaking-each-others-hands-872957/

To make this a successful career and to maximize your potential, here are some recommendations for you:

Find a niche

If you have a specific area you specialize in, you will be able to get the right experience and become an expert in that field much quicker. Your attention will be devoted to the projects that help you develop and apply that specific skill.

For example, if you are a designer, you can specialize in logo design and work on with clients that have such projects for you. You will learn about all those industry secrets, tricks and most importantly, about the trends that will help you distinguish yourself as a designer. If you are a writer, it might be easier for you to specialize in a certain topic, such as fitness. With each new article, you get more experience, and you develop your knowledge. This helps you do your job better, it helps you gain reputation, and it eventually allows you to charge more (since you are an expert, after all).

Have in mind that it is impossible to be expert on everything. You might be good at multiple fields, and you can be quite resourceful which will help you demonstrate remarkable work performance, but if you want to be an expert in something, if you want to be that go-to person, you need to find your niche.

Learn how to communicate

You have already seen how good communication is essential to stay on good terms with the clients and to be able to work together successfully. But good communication goes beyond your business arrangement with the clients. Here are some situations where you need to demonstrate your skillfulness in communication:

Social media posting

These represent you personally or your brand, so learn how to create updates that really resonate with and engage your followers.

Customer support

Working with customers, you will meet all sorts of people. And some of them might be really unpleasant, impatient, and even rude. You need to take the high road, always. Make sure you continuously keep your cool, stay professional, show understanding and offer assistance with solving the issue.

Your email subscribers

The way you address your subscribers affects the relationship you are going to have with them and what kind of a relationship you will create, whether they will trust you, etc.

Build your reputation

Once you start working online, regardless of your niche or type of work you do, a lot will rely on your reputation. Online reviews, forums and even social media are full of people, regular users,

who constantly share their experience. Reviews you get as an online shop, or an individual who works as a freelancer will have an impact on your opportunities to earn money in the future.

You should not be too afraid, and start dreading what others might say about you, but it is critical to have in mind that building a name for yourself should be one your goals in your online career. You will achieve this by:

- Successfully completing projects

- Communicating well with clients/customers

- Staying professional

- Demonstrating excellence in the work that you do

If you choose your niche and you start working on your reputation, you will eventually create influence in your industry, which will additionally improve your opportunities and possibilities to make money online.

Provide value

One of the easiest ways to build a great reputation is to always to provide value. Always think about how you can give more, how you can do better. Aim for perfection whenever you can.

The idea is not obsessing over every little detail, but instead, you want to show off your best work. Sometimes you might have a client, and you know you will not work with them anymore. Sometimes you are underpaid for the job you do. Sometimes, the job turns out to be nothing like you have imagined. Even so, try to stay professional and provide value. In the long run, this will help you build the reputation that really stands out, and you can always say that you are proud of the work you have done, even if you were not very happy with the job terms.

Never should you cut corners and provide anything but your best work. You never know who might come across your work. You might end up getting amazing opportunities when someone discovers your work online.

Also, when you provide value, when you do your best work, you are usually going to have only satisfied clients. And this is something you need to think about when working online.

Stay informed

The first part of this practice refers to keeping up with the trends in your industry. Have in mind that the online world is a fast-changing environment, and you need to stay on top of your game.

Even though you have set up your business, and everything is up and running, you will always be monitoring your workflow, thinking of ways of how to improve things, etc.

We have seen how many scams could be a potential threat to your business effort, so keeping up with these trends should also be a part of your priority list. If you are aware of the potential dangers and issues that might affect your business, it is better to be prepared and expect them.

Be careful when outsourcing

A lot of the work you do online can be outsourced. The greatest advantage is that you can hire people to do the job for you, help you accept more tasks, etc. The person or an agency you are outsourcing work to can take the percentage, and as long as you get the job done for the client, you can use this to your benefit.

However, you have seen how much reputation is important in this industry and how one negative review can do you harm. Even though some things can be outsourced successfully, you should always be careful when using such a practice. Remember that you have got a lot to lose, and you need to provide value to your clients or customers. When hiring help, hire someone you have worked with or someone who already has a solid reputation.

This section particular refers to freelancing jobs. On the other hand, having a webshop is certainly a great place to start outsourcing work.

Define contracts /TOS

Avoid starting any online work without defining the contact, which includes your obligations, as well as your rights. Also, Terms of Service is a document you should always refer to, regardless if you have an online store, or you are a freelancer who works for companies as an independent contractor.

Starting with a positive attitude and hoping to create a career, you must never forget that there are so many devious people out there. In the next chapter, you will see some of the most common scams to avoid. But quite often, you might start working with someone and only after a while does it turn out not to be a legitimate business, or face a client that simply refuses to pay for the work you have done.

Also, it is helping define the terms under which you provide your service (or sell products). This enables you to protect yourself and your business from any claims or disputes in the future.

Find colleagues

Working online can be quite a lonesome work. You communicate with people via email, through social networks, but hardly ever do you get the chance to talk to people. Even though the social aspect is often missing when working online, you should change that and try to find people you can interact with.

Not only will you get to fill this missing factor, but interaction with other people who do the same or similar work that you do can help you discover new interesting practice, learn about shortcuts, get ideas how to improve your work routine. Ultimately, it helps in sharing the experience and learning about ups and downs every one of them goes through. It is a priceless lesson that can have such a positive impact on your career.

Balance life and career

When you choose this to be your career, to be your own boss, it can become difficult to separate your business from your life. You get so caught up in everything, and you somehow start prioritizing business over any other thing in life, simply because the business is yours. This is especially difficult if you are working from home. You can never really leave work because you know that your business is one click away.

Nonetheless, try to make some sort balance. This is especially important to lead a successful life. Your business must not take precedence always and it must not overwhelm you completely.

The final thought in this chapter should reflect the need to be hardworking and professional when doing business online. Even if you are not an organized person, you should train yourself to become one. Ultimately, making money online is a job that requires you to have all those skills we have mentioned in the beginning, to make sure you really succeed with your efforts and unlock all the possibilities this career of yours includes.

16

Potential Scams When Making Money Online

16. Possible Scams When Making Money Online

The idea of making money online is very appealing. People dream to be able to quit their day-to-day job and make money from the comfort of their home. Those unemployed are lured by the pompous figures those working online make. However, the reality is that there are so many people who will try to exploit this idea and lure you into scams where you will not earn anything, and might even end up paying yourself.

https://www.pexels.com/photo/man-with-hand-on-temple-looking-at-laptop-842554/

Scams to avoid

Here you will find a list of some of the most commonly used scams, along with the brief description of how the scammers pull this off.

Writer and research scams

This scam is particularly targeting writers and assistants to do the research. The scammers are not interested in your money, so you will not pay anything. Instead, their goal is for you to get the work done for them, after which you will not get paid. In most cases, these scams start with asking a sample of your work.

Then they either hire you, or you are asked to complete the second round of tasks where you have to do more work for free. Supposedly, they want to assess your work. They commonly require you to write on specific topics or do research related to a particular problem. In the end, they do not pay you, and all your work will be in vain. This scam is widely used on Craigslist.

Money scams

Money scam looks so appealing at first because you are only required to process payments and then transfer them to another account. Along the way, you keep the percentage of every transfer. After these start well, and you successfully transfer a couple of payments, those who got scammed received a payment (usually way higher than they used to receive) and transferred it without suspecting a thing. After some time, they realized that the deposit would not clear, so the bank canceled the transaction even though the person had already sent the payment.

Other money scams include money laundering, hacking your bank account when you send the details to be paid for some made up job, etc.

Multi-level marketing

Multi-level marketing (MML) is commonly used as a scam in affiliate marketing. It works like this. People hired by the company are supposed to recruit new people to sell and promote the product. The profit is thus shared among the affiliates and this creates a sort of a pyramid. However, some of the largest scale scams turned out to be MLM pyramids where the people were hired to sell no product at all.

The problem for you occurs if you are hired by the recruiter and asked to make a deposit in order to participate. You are promised to earn a lot of money, but you need to pay sort of an "investment" to get training, access to the database, etc. In the end, you will not get paid, and you will lose your "investment".

Contest and sweepstakes

These scams again require a fee to participate and offer all sorts of things from earning prizes to getting a job for the company behind the scam.

Watch out for these signals

If you choose an online career and you are interested in making money online, you must be aware of those scams, and you must learn how to recognize a scam. Not only will you waste your time and money, but these scams can also be really harmful to you, so always do thorough research and watch out for any signals that could tell you that something is wrong.

Sounds too good to be true

When the deal or job opportunity sounds too good to be true, it often is. You should not get tricked by those "get rich quick" promises. Even though making online can turn into quite a profitable career, each of these jobs you have seen require hard work, it requires dedication, commitment, and above all, it needs time.

The first warning sign should be a promise of a huge salary, usually for little or no work. Just think about it. Why would anyone give you that money? What is in it for them? What kind of value do you have to offer to them? If things sound fishy, avoid the deal.

Vague job description

If you come across a job post that is pretty vague and offers no concrete details, the chances are that this might be a fake job. Once you get in touch for such employment, you can end up being subjected to numerous scams, as you will probably provide your contact details. Besides these problems, this can lead you to life-threatening danger, especially when you have a scheduled interview and you have no idea what you can come across.

When you look up jobs online, always make sure you get enough details about what this job requires and what your tasks will be. Do not get persuaded by sweet-talking and fake promises of what you "could" achieve.

No contact information

Another sign that should put you off from applying to a job post is the lack of contact details. If the company is legitimate and they do real business, they usually provide information such as phone number, address, the name of the contact person, etc.

If you do not see any of these data, you should either ask for those before applying or you should skip applying altogether.

Research shows nothing

If you see these signs with a vague description and no contact details, your next step should be researching the person or company online. Nowadays, you can google anything, and if nothing shows up, this might be some new scam with new players involved.

People who have been fouled and engaged in a scam usually share this experience somewhere online. In this case, the company you are interviewing for might already have a bad reputation that you still have not heard of. This is why it is safest to check the company's background. When you apply through platforms for finding jobs (such as Upwork), you will see the client's reputation so you will be able to assess the situation more easily.

Being contacted about a job offer without applying

One day you might open up your email to find a job offer. Seduced by the lucrative offer, you might not even think about the fact that you have not actually submitted any application. These offers can be legit and come from companies that have researched your reputation online and have heard about you through recommendations.

However, these offers are rare, and you should immediately be suspicious. Start with the research and then explore why this company would contact you? Also, read the email you have received carefully, as you might notice suspicious elements here as well.

You are required to provide personal/confidential information

Be very careful when applying for a job where you are required to provide personal or confidential information such as your social security number, bank account, etc. In some cases, employees might need those details, especially if you will be handling sensitive data or money. But in most cases, your personal details can be used in some scams, allowing scammers to commit frauds or even steal your identity.

Avoid deals based on product profit

Even though this could be a legitimate way to earn money, and it might also be more profitable than a one-off payment. However, you should accept such deals only when they come from a person you know and trust. In that case, also, you might want to create a contract that will define the terms and conditions for the product profit payment.

Otherwise, this could only be a scam where you are required to do free work. Once you complete the work, you will see no record of any profit and the scammers will just stop contacting you.

Conclusion

Scams are a well-known problem, and people are trying to deal with them. Email services are using filters and advanced screening process to filter emails precisely for this reason. Websites that offer job posts do the same, and they also hire people to monitor the activities and prevent (or quickly stop) possible scams.

But the best way to stay protected is to look out for yourself. You must not be naive and believe everything you read. Even if you are a beginner and you are not sure if the offer is real or not, always do thorough research. Extra caution is suggested when providing personal information.

You need to accept that this job comes with the risks, so being educated and being able to check if something is legitimate is the best way to stay protected.

17

Glossary

17. Glossary

1. Add-ons – Add-ons refers to the program or software that is added to the core features of a particular platform or tool.

2. Affiliate link – An affiliate link is a special link used in affiliate marketing to track the performance of the affiliates. Every affiliate is given a special affiliate link which contains that affiliate's ID or username.

3. Affiliate network – It is a platform that connects merchants and affiliates. It enables merchants to increase the visibility of their programs. For affiliates, affiliate networks provide a comprehensive resource of all available affiliate programs, grouped into categories.

4. Affiliate program – Merchants create affiliate programs in order to reach affiliates who will promote their products. Affiliates who want to take part will have to join the program and accept its terms and conditions.

5. Algorithm – It is a program that defines the process according to which search engine comprehend and sort the data.

6. Bandwidth – The terms refers to the maximum amount of data that can be transferred. It is used in reference to the amount of data a website can show to the online users.

7. Branded keyword – Branded keyword include the name of the brand in the keyword phrase. Among branded keywords, when creating search engine ads, typos of the brand name are also included.

8. Checkout page – In e-commerce, this page represents the page where the customer goes when checking out the items in the cart. It precedes the actual purchase.

9. Content optimization – Content optimization is the process of adapting content based on the best practices and guidelines in order for such content to be successfully indexed by the search engines and shown in the search engine results.

10. Conversion – A conversion is a desirable action. It is an action you want online users to complete, because this leads to the accomplishment of your goals. It can be a sign-up, a click, a sale, etc.

11. Cookie life – This refers to the period during which the cookies are stored in the users' browser.

12. Copyright – Copyright is an exclusive legal right over the intellectual property, and it refers to the printed or digitally published intellectual property.

13. Copywriting – Copywriting is the term that is used to define writing which is specially done to create content to be used in advertising or other segments of marketing.

14. Customization – It is the process of modifying something, usually based on particular standards or with a specific goal in mind.

15. E-commerce – The term is short for electronic commerce and it refers to the process of buying and selling online.

16. E-commerce platform – It is a platform that is used to host an e-commerce website.

17. Email marketing – As a part of online marketing, email marketing is focused on the promotion of products or services through email campaigns.

18. Embed – This term is usually used in coding to define a process of adding or integrating something in another platform or software.

19. Engagement – Engagement is the term that refers to the ability to encourage online users to do a particular action. Usually, it is some sort of interaction, such as commenting, participating in a challenge, etc.

20. Follower – In terms of online marketing, a follower is a person who follows a person or a brand, usually on social networks, and by subscribing to a newsletter.

21. Ghostwriter – A ghostwriter is a person hired to write a work which is credited to another author. Ghostwriters can work on many different writing projects such as blog articles, landing pages, email campaigns, etc.

22. H tag – H tag is used in HTML to signify the header tag, which is usually the tile of the article or page.

23. Hosted platform – When a platform is hosted, it means that it provides online storage and the interface necessary to access your data. This means that you do not need your own web server.

24. Image optimization – It is the segment of optimization that refers to the process of adapting images based on search engine optimization standards.

25. Index – Index is the term referring to the process of search engines crawling the web pages, discovering new content and adding that content to the database. During the process of indexation, the pages are classified based on the keywords and other optimization elements.

26. Keyword – A keyword is a word or a phrase that is significant to a blog or a marketing campaign. It is phrase that is relevant to the content, and it shows what the content is about. Websites and blogs can have several different keywords they use to optimize content.

27. Keyword research – It represents the process of doing the research to discover the most relevant and most suitable keywords to use in the process of content optimization.

28. Landing page – A landing page is a web page where the users arrive after clicking the link that is posted on another web page, social media, email, etc.

29. Layout – It is the way something is arranged. It usually refers to the appearance of the particular interface.

30. Lead – Lead is a contact of an online user and it primarily refers to that user's email address. Unlike regular subscribers, leads are more likely to become your customers.

31. Lead magnet – Lead magnet is an offer which is offered to online users. It is designed with the intention to encourage those users to provide their email address, and thus become leads.

32. Link building – Link building is a part site optimization that includes activities that will help you earn links to your website or blog.

33. Long-tail keyword – It is a phrase that contains several words and is used to target specific online users. Even though it targets fewer people that generic keywords, long-tail keywords are usually less competitive and thus they provide better results.

34. Mailing list – A mailing list is a list of email addresses of the subscribers, previous customers or people who have given you permission to receive email updates from you.

35. Meta description – Meta description is an HTML tag that shows a snippet of the page in order to summarize its content. It is shown in the search engine results below the title. The most relevant recommendation is to use a keyword in the meta description of a website or blog page.

36. Niche – Niche is a term that refers to a topic that is primarily covered, it is the main topic, the one you specialize in.

37. Online marketing – Online marketing is the process of advertising on the internet using various channels that are available, such as website, blog, search engines, social media, email, etc. It is also called internet or digital marketing.

38. Optimization – Optimization is the process of improving something to increase its performance. It mainly refers to the content and website optimization, which includes adapting those to increase their visibility in the search engine result pages.

39. Organic reach – Organic reach represent the number of people who have seen content through organic (unpaid) distribution. It can refer to reach in the search engine result pages, social networks, etc.

40. Outsourcing – Outsourcing is a practice of hiring another company or an individual to do the task for you. Traditionally, the task that is outsourced is done in-house but due to a lack of time or better management opportunities, companies use this practice of outsourcing work.

41. Page speed optimization – It refers to the process of improving page loading time as this is one of the factors influencing the performance of that page. Search engines consider loading time as one of the factors when ranking pages in the search results.

42. Payment gateway – Payment gateway is a service that is used in e-commerce to process and authorize payments.

43. Plugin – Plugin is software that is usually used to add a specific feature to an existing program. It is an additional component.

44. Profit margin – It represents the percentage of net profit, and it is a metric used to measure profitability.

45. Refund – Refund is the money paid back to the customer, usually because the customer is not satisfied with the goods or services.

46. Search engine – A search engine is a program used to search information on the internet. The purpose of the search engine is to index new content and store it in its database to be displayed in response to a relevant search query.

47. Search engine advertising – It is a form of advertising that relies on showing the advertisements next to the organic results in the search engine result pages.

48. Search engine optimization – SEO is the process of optimizing and improving a website or a blog using various elements that will increase rank in the search engine result pages.

49. Search engine results – Search engine results include a list of results that appear in the search engine as a response to a search query. These results are pulled from the search engine's database of indexed webpages.

50. Self-hosted platform – It is a platform that enables you to set up your own server and handle the entire management process, software installation, etc. This is a more advanced solution as it requires more knowledge to set up everything, but it offers more flexibility and customization possibilities.

51. Shopping cart – Shopping cart is a software that enables online users to browse through products and put them in the virtual basket.

52. Social media advertising – It is the process of advertising on social media using the ad manager provided by the platform in question.

53. Subscribe button – It is a clickable button that encourages regular online users and website visitors to subscribe and receive future updates from you.

54. Subscriber – A subscriber is a person who decides to follow you and grant you a permission to reach them later through the media they used for subscribing. Most commonly, subscribers are members of your mailing list, but the term may also refer to social media subscribers.

55. Target audience – Target audience represents a specific group of online users that you are trying to reach through your online efforts. Usually, those are the people who are most likely to be interested in your content, and most likely to become your customers.

56. Template – When used in the context of building websites, a template represents a set of predefined pages, an outline that speeds up the process of creating the website.

57. Title optimization – It represents the process of optimizing and improving the titles based on the search engine guidelines. Since the title has a lot of importance in the process of indexing pages and deducting the meaning, it is crucial to pay attention to this aspect of optimization.

58. URL – Uniform Resource Locator (URL) is the web address of an online resource. It points to a web page.

18

Making Money Online Questionnaire

18. Making Money Online Questionnaire

Questions

1. Which of these tasks can help you stay organized?

a) Working online

b) Creating daily to-do lists

c) Communication

d) Having a 9 to 5 job

2. Which of these skills means that you are good at solving problems?

a) Resourcefulness

b) Communication

c) Organization

d) Optimism

3. Which of these are benefits of working online?

a) Flexibility

b) Lifelong learning

c) Higher productivity

d) All of the above

4. Why is determining long-term goals important when starting out with online work?

a) It will help you organize everything more successfully.

b) It will help you register your business.

c) You will have more success in staying independent.

d) You will not need to use payment gateway.

5. What is the benefit of selling digital products?

a) They are more expensive than physical products.

b) There are many platforms to promote them.

c) You can reach customers worldwide.

d) You can create your online shop.

6. When do you need website hosting and domain?

a) When you want to join a marketplace.

b) When you want to create a social media profile.

c) When you want to create your webshop.

d) All of the above.

7.Which of these is a marketplace to sell products online?

a) ePay

b) eBay

c) eBook

d) eCommerce

8. What is the principal requirement when starting to sell through a marketplace?

a) Having a website

b) Having your webshop

c) Registering for an account

d) Paying a deposit

9. Which of these platforms enables you to sell photos?

a) Shutterstock

b) CD Baby

c) TuneCore

d) Spotify

10. What is the benefit of having a webshop as opposed to selling through online marketplaces?

a) Flexibility

b) Customization option

c) Possibility for growing your business

d) All of the above

11. How does the online shopping process work? Which are the three elements a shopper must go through?

a) Shopping cart, social networks and landing page

b) Shopping cart, checkout, and webshop

c) Checkout, email, and social networks

d) Shopping cart, checkout and payment gateway

12. Why are freelancing platforms a good start for freelancers?

a) They offer no consistent work.

b) They offer tools to advertise your webshop.

c) They already have a large database on employers posting jobs.

d) They do not require any payment from freelancers.

13. Which of these freelancing platforms is known as a $5 platform?

a) Fiverr

b) Upwork

c) Freelancer

d) People Per Hour

14. Where can you promote an online shop?

a) On social networks

b) In search engines

c) In emails

d) All of the above

15. What is the purpose of using visual elements on a product page?

a) Create categories

b) Increase engagement level

c) Feature paid ads

d) Improve search engine advertising

16. One way to directly promote your webshop to the online users is through:

a) Social networks

b) Long-tail keywords

c) Optimization

d) Heading tag

17. When you start freelancing, it is recommended that you:

a) Create an online profile

b) Choose a niche

c) Determine the target clients

d) All of the above

18. What do you need to consider when setting up your hourly rates as a freelancer?

a) Industry standards

b) Optimization tools

c) Online profile

d) All of the above

19. Which of these could be featured as a part of the product page:

a) Social followers

b) Online profile

c) Frequently asked questions with answers

d) Mailing list

20. How can influencers earn money online?

a) They get opportunities to work with brands.

b) They get opportunities to participate in workshops.

c) They can use affiliate links.

d) All of the above.

21. Those who monetize their online presence with affiliate links are called:

a) Merchants

b) Affiliates

c) Advertisers

d) Search engines

22. Which of these blog monetization methods relies on the use of dynamic ads?

a) Sponsored post

b) Affiliate link

c) AdSense

d) All of the above

23. The main advantage of dropshipping is:

a) The fact that you do not store any supplies

b) Low profit margins

c) No possibility for branding

d) The fact that you depend on the specific location

24. Which element of SEO helps you optimize a product page:

a) Keywords (branded, regular and long-tail keywords)

b) Online marketplace

c) Frequently asked questions with answers

d) Mailing list

25. Which of these can be used to assess if someone is an influencer?

a) The number of hired freelancers

b) The level of interaction with followers

c) Search engine ads

d) The number of social media followers on Instagram

26. What is the advantage of teaching online classes?

a) A limited number of hours

b) Customization of the program per student

c) Flexible hours

d) Time for preparation

27. Which of these platforms is used for creating online courses?

a) Skype

b) Zoom

c) Udemy

d) All of the above

28. Who is a freelancer?

a) A person who has three or more jobs.

b) An independent contractor.

c) A person who sells online.

d) An unemployed person.

29. One of the advantages of being a freelancer is:

a) No consistent work

b) No sick leave

c) Flexible hours

d) Relying on your reputation

30. What are the common ways to monetize a blog?

a) Displaying banners

b) Using AdSense

c) Featuring affiliate links

d) All of the above

31. Which of these platforms help you rent a property online?

a) 99design

b) Fiverr

c) Swagbucks

d) AirBNB

32. What is the essential thing you will need to start a blog?

a) Blog name

b) Social media profile

c) Blogging community

d) Mailing list

33. Which of these is a part of blog optimization?

a) Lead magnets

b) Keyword optimization

c) Search engine advertising

d) Monetization

34. What is the drawback of being a freelancer?

a) No consistent work

b) Independence

c) Flexible hours

d) All of the above

35. Influencer marketing relies on using:

a) Social media marketing tools to promote a brand

b) Search engine advertising and AdSense

c) The influence of an individual to promote a brand or business

d) The freelancers to work independently

36. What is the requirement to enable YouTube monetization program?

a) Having 40 watch hours in the previous month and 10 subscribers

b) Having 400 watch hours in the previous month and 10 subscribers

c) Having 400 watch hours in the previous 12 months and 100 subscribers

d) Having 4000 watch hours in the previous 12 months and 1000 subscribers

37. How can merchants track the sales in affiliate marketing?

a) Using affiliate banners

b) By tracking the performance of the link building

c) Using affiliate links

d) Using social media insights

38. One of the conditions based on which merchants choose affiliates is:

a) The target group of the affiliate

b) Affiliate links

c) Affiliate program

d) Social media profile of the affiliate

39. Which of these can be used to customize a YouTube channel?

a) Channel art

b) Channel icon

c) Channel description

d) All of the above

40. Which of these types of ads on YouTube includes a semi-transparent box displayed over 20% of a video?

a) Display ad

b) Overlay ad

c) Skippable video ad

d) Bumper ad

41. Which of these monetization strategies can be used to make money on YouTube?

a) Working with brands

b) Sponsored posts

c) Search engine ads

d) All of the above

42. Which software can be used for teaching classes online?

a) Skype

b) WordPress

c) Quora

d) JoomlaLMS

43. Which of these is a signal that something might be a scam?

a) Long-tail keywords

b) Affiliate links

c) Vague job description

d) Paid online surveys

44. Which of these is software for writing, editing and formatting text?

a) Zoom

b) Smashwords

c) LinkedIn

d) Google Docs

45. Which of these is a website service that pays for completing online surveys?

a) Toluna

b) DietBet

c) ReceiptPal

d) Squadhelp

46. Why is it important to always provide value when working online?

a) Because your reputation depends on it

b) To improve your communication skill

c) Because you are a resourceful person

d) To stay informed

47. What is the document that helps you regulate your business, determine obligations and rights.

a) Online shop

b) Moodle

c) Terms of Service

d) Customer support

48. What are the best practices when working online?

a) Learning how to communicate

b) Providing value

c) Building a reputation

d) All of the above

49. What is the drawback of publishing your work independently?

a) You will have more creative freedom.

b) You will have a lot of flexibility.

c) You will have limited promotion options.

d) You will have to take care of online promotion of your work.

50. What is one of the disadvantages of using a hosted solution for online courses?

a) It is quicker and easier than a self-hosted solution.

b) It is free.

c) It is not free as the platform requires membership or a fee.

d) All of the above

Answers

1. b	18. a	35. c
2. a	19. c	36. d
3. d	20. d	37. c
4. a	21. b	38. a
5. c	22. c	39. d
6. c	23. a	40. b
7. b	24. a	41. a
8. c	25. b	42. a
9. a	26. c	43. c
10. d	27. c	44. d
11. d	28. b	45. a
12. c	29. c	46. a
13. a	30. d	47. c
14. d	31. d	48. d
15. b	32. a	49. d
16. a	33. b	50. a
17. d	34. a	

19

Conclusion

19. Conclusion

In this era of globalization and digitalization, we see the growing trend of so-called gig economy. And this kind of technical development has directly contributed to it. This is a new type of working environment where people work gigs. They are independent contractors who are hired based on a short-term project or contract. This whole concept of gig economy is the evolution of how people see jobs nowadays and the application of this concept to the digital realm.

People are no longer interested in steady jobs where they would spend their entire life. They are not afraid to change jobs, to start something new and to take risks. The mindset is completely different from what it used to be. Independence in working gives people the feeling of great freedom and ultimate control of their most precious asset - time. They can work as little as they want or as much as they want.

Starting out

Despite having freedom, working online does involve a lot of work and sacrifice. It is not always ideal as you might imagine. As for the work, sometimes you will do a couple of hours a day, but sometimes you will do more than you would if you had a 9 to 5 job.

Like every beginning, starting out this career can be difficult. You might come across poorly paid jobs, you might start working with clients who are extremely difficult to work with, etc. You will need to invest so much of your time and you will be quite eager to do so at first. But the results might not come immediately and this is something you need to be aware of.

It might be months until you find a first client as a freelancer. It might be weeks before you see any sales in your online shop. And that is something you need to expect and be prepared for.

You should not start with this career if you do not have enough patience to hold on to your idea and give it some time until you see the results.

One of the biggest dilemmas out there is when to start. Is there a perfect time of the year, a perfect period in your life, etc.? Should you wait until you quit your day job, or should you start making money online as a part-time job?

The answer is that it all depends on you. It depends on your situation and how you can handle everything. There is no ideal time, especially not a universal time.

Most people try to at least set up their new business or career prior to leaving their existing job. Usually, those are people who cannot or will not continue working their regular job and are

interested to shift their career to the digital realm. However, most people do have recurring expenses each month, such as bills, rent, food, etc. These are all the reasons why doing both might be an option to go for. You would still secure your existence while building a new career. It will be difficult to balance between the two, but the transition might be smoother than quitting the existing job before you have started making money online.

Lifelong learning

Regardless of the opportunities you choose to start making money online, you need to have in mind that the internet changes all the time. New practices and new processes are constantly introduced, so having a career like this means that you need to start and keep on learning.

If you expect to set up everything and then go off the radar, you should know that things will not be so smooth. To be able to successfully work online, find new opportunities and get better at your job, you need to professionally develop and spend time learning. This type of education is informal learning because your main resources will be online courses, seminars, blog articles, reports, webinars, etc. All of these are relevant resources about your industry that will help you get a better understanding of how things can be done more efficiently with better results.

Taking the opportunity

Now that you have read about these possibilities to make money online, and with enough knowledge to explore this field even more, it is time to determine the career you want to try out. The beauty of this is that you can try several of these. You can be a designer and you can also teach design. You can work as a developer, but you could also have your blog or a YouTube channel where you would educate, or even entertain others.

There is no guarantee that every opportunity will be perfect and that you will be able to profit from each of them, but when you start thinking outside of the box, and when you prepare yourself for anything that might come along, you open up so many new pathways for you.

If you take 40-hour work week as an example, you realize that a major portion of your life you spend at work. A study finds that the time spent working equals to:

"21% of your total waking hours over a 76 year lifespan, assuming 8 hours of sleep a night

50% of your total waking hours during any given working day"

(*Source*)

Realistically, your job occupies a significant percentage of your life and you ought to choose a career that enables to do the job you love and to have more control of your time.

Final suggestion

As you have seen all of these possibilities for making money online, you have noticed that staying organized and consistent is a very important part, regardless of the career you choose. To help you stay organized and keep getting the best results with your efforts, here's a "thinking process" you should implement:

Define

Start by defining what you want to do. Choose the project and then define the exact things you want to do. Also, try to set some goals you want to achieve with these activities, regardless if that is getting XX subscribers or earning XX dollars.

Research

Research part refers to analyzing the market, analyzing the competition, but it also includes learning the process and specific requirements that will be needed for you to successfully complete the project. Sometimes, you might need to learn to use a new software, or you might just want to explore the topic to be able to write a new article. If you are a freelancer, research may include looking up the job specifics and how you will be able to perform such a job.

Plan

You know what you want to do and you have done your research. Now it is time to plan how to do that. Come up with a layout of activities, in which order they are going to happen, if anyone will help you with them, etc. Also, think about deadlines. Set up a sort of a timeframe for each activity. This will have a massive role in helping you stay organized.

Implement

The phase where you actually do the work. When you have covered the first three steps, you will see that the implementation will go much smoother. You will have an exact roadmap with all the details, and you will avoid all the distractions.

Analyze

The final stage is the analysis of your work. Again, it does not matter the type of job you do, if you are a freelancer or you have webshop. The goal is to reflect on what you have done and the

results you were able to achieve. This provides insights into how good you were at planning and research, how productive your work is and how you can improve in the future.

This 5-stage plan is an excellent way to analyze your work and constantly make improvements. It can be applied to many situations, such as when you start your career. But the best thing is that this is something you can easily apply to every little thing you have to do. For example, if you have a blog article to write, try using the plan and going through each stage. Or, if you have a product launch in your shop, divide the work into these stages and follow along.

Having in mind your interest in gig economy and possibilities of making money online, you absolutely need to adapt your thinking process to this new environment. A significant part of your responsibility will be organizing your own work and your time, so a strategy such as this one (and many more you can find) are precisely the tools you need to succeed in your career.

Bonus Material: How To Start A Blog

One of the most important aspects of Making Money Online is being an owner of a website, a webshop or a blog. On the following pages, we will guide you, how you can start your own blog. By learning this, you will also be ready to Start Making Money Online. In this section of the book, you will learn the following topics:

- The basics of blogging

- Blogging platforms and hosting

- Planning your blog

- Blog design

- Choosing blog plugins

- Creating and publishing articles

- How to optimize a blog post

- Integrating social media

- Getting your blog indexed

- Blog statistics to monitor

- Build engagement on your blog

- Ways to promote your blog

- Making money through your blog

Are you ready to start learning some more about these important topics?

Great! Let's get started… Soon you are ready to Start Making Money Online!

1

Introduction

1. Introduction: How To Start a Blog

Starting a blog is an exciting endeavor allowing you to reach places you could not even imagine when you first started out. So many success stories showcase bloggers who have become adventure travelers exploring the world to earn for a living, all the while achieving their dreams of becoming internationally famous, or turning around their career and being able to turn their passion into a daily job that they truly love.

If you are one of those interested in starting a blog and exploring opportunities it might open for you, this ebook is a helpful resource to guide you through the process of planning the blog, choosing the platforms, designing a blog, publishing and optimizing content, and eventually promoting your blog. This is a practical guide with lots of examples and screenshots that will help you to easily apply best practices to your own blog.

Blogging offers a lot of benefits and possibilities to integrate a blog into a business strategy and to earn profit from it. To explore the topic of blogging in more details, please visit emarketinginstitute.org, where you will find an ebook about blogging.

For a better understanding of the process of starting a blog, it is helpful to have some basic knowledge of online marketing. In essence, a blog is a part of online marketing strategy, and it is connected to other segments of online presence, such as search engine optimization, social media marketing, email marketing, etc.

The success of your blog will largely depend on the content you create and publish on your blog. However, integration of blogging into an online presence or business strategy is another aspect that has a massive impact on your likelihood to succeed as a blogger. For example, an outstanding article will hardly reach any online users if you do not know how to optimize it and enable search engines to discover and index it first.

This means that you need to think beyond content creation when starting a blog. You need to think about:

- How you will present the content
- Who your readers are
- How to reach online readers
- What tools you will need to optimize your blog
- How and why you need to integrate social networks

- How to monitor visits and leverage the statistics

The goal of this ebook is to answer all of these questions and go a step further. Once you finish reading, you will have a detailed plan on how to start and which path to take. Your approach will be organized and structured, which all help you implement your strategy and get good results.

To start a blog, you will need:

- A computer

- Internet connection

- A great idea

- Budget (Optional)

https://www.pexels.com/photo/ballpen-blur-close-up-computer-461077/

The reason why the budget is optional is the fact that you really can start a blog with no budget at all. It is possible to start your blog even today without spending a dime. Still, you will soon find out that there are things worth investing in. As you go through the following chapters, you will soon discover when it is recommended to go for a paid option, even if the free one exists.

Blogging statistics worth knowing

The goal of the following statistics is to illustrate the state of blogging nowadays, what successful blogs do right, and why blogging is such an important part of doing business online.

- Featuring a blog as a key part of your website will give you a 434% better chance of being ranked highly on search engines. (Tech Client)
- Companies that published 16+ blog posts per month got almost 3.5X more traffic than companies that published 0-4 monthly posts. (HubSpot)
- There is over 4 million blog posts written each day. (InternetLiveStats)
- Small businesses with blogs generate 126% more leads. (Tech Client)
- Websites with blogs have 97% more indexed links. (Tech Client)
- Social media is the most popular channel for promotion of content. Over 95% bloggers share their content on social media. SEO follows with 64%, email marketing with 58% and influencer outreach 25%. (OrbitMedia)
- It is noticeable that there is almost a 5x increase in paid content promotion in 2017 since 2014. (OrbitMedia)
- Almost two-thirds of bloggers pay attention to SEO. (OrbitMedia)
- 42% of bloggers who always check blog analytics report "strong results".
- 1142 words is the average length of a typical blog post. (OrbitMedia)
- Titles with 6-13 words attract the highest and most consistent amount of traffic. (HubSpot)
- 55% of bloggers update articles at least sometimes. (OrbitMedia)
- 45% of marketers say blogging is their #1 most important content strategy. (Social Media Examiner)
- Compounding blog posts make up 10% of all blog posts and generate 38% of overall traffic. (HubSpot)

When you look at the statistics above, it is possible to conclude the following:

- Blogging is an important part of content marketing strategy.

- Companies that blog report better results (in terms of traffic increase, lead generation, sales, etc.)
- Social media is the most popular channel for promoting blog content. Other channels you should use include: SEO, email marketing, influencer outreach and paid promotion.

Overall, blogging represents the core of forming an online presence. It helps you establish your presence, connect with the online users and promote what you want, regardless if that is an opinion, a product, a digital product, or service. A blog is an outlet to present a business strategy or to simply present yourself as a blogger or influencer. Since it is a completely self-managed presence, it gives you an opportunity to customize the appearance and highlight what you need. All of this is done in order to help you achieve your blogging goals.

2

The Basics of Blogging

2. The Basics of Blogging

Starting a project such as a blog is much easier if you know the basics. It is helpful to understand what a blog is, what types of blogs exist and what kind of content can be uploaded to a blog. Not only will this give you a glimpse of what to expect of the blogosphere, but it is also useful when planning your own blog.

https://www.pexels.com/photo/business-coffee-composition-computer-265667/

What is a blog?

A blog is a web page that is regularly updated with new content. This content is presented as a series of blog articles (also called posts). Usually, blog posts are sorted in reverse chronological order so that the visitors will see the newest content first. Content can also be arranged into categories, but within the categories, again, you will see posts in reverse chronological order. Unlike websites, which have what is called "static" pages, the main characteristic of blog content are its dynamic pages. New pages are regularly added with old content being updated when necessary.

Blogs can be run by:

- Individuals

- Teams of bloggers

- A company

Ever since blogging started in 1997, there was this idea for blogs to be perceived as a part of a large online community. This is how the term blogosphere was coined. It is used to include all of the blogs and the different ways they are connected. This sense of community is another thing that differentiates blogs from websites. Bloggers strive to achieve the connections with other bloggers, through commenting, sharing, having blogrolls, etc. The more they do this, the more they establish their own persona as a blogger and indirectly build their influence.

Types of blogs

When it comes to blog types, it is not possible to enlist all of them, because they vary depending on the topic. There are also a lot of blogs that combine a couple of the types. What is helpful here is to understand the most general groups where most blogs fit.

Personal blog

The main idea with the personal blog is to create personalized content where the blogger shares own opinion, experience, beliefs, advice, etc. It involves rather individualized approach and it can, but does not have to be, monetized. In the spotlight of this blog, there is a person, who can eventually become an influencer. Typical examples of personal blogs are lifestyle blogs, mom blogs, etc.

Business blog

Business blogging is a common practice today where businesses use blogging as another strategy to position their business in the online market. The main difference from personal blogging is that a business blog usually has a more substantial budget, a team of bloggers working on its content and content promotion, etc. The topics of the business blogs can be different. However, it is always a topic that is somehow related to achieving business goals, so the topic should be interesting and engaging to the target group the business is trying to reach through blog.

When you think about the business blog, you first think about large brands and their comprehensive strategies. For example, an international clothing brand can use a blog to engage its customers. Be that as it may, a business blog is a legitimate strategy on a micro level as well. For example, if you are a fitness trainer and you want to promote your service and share your knowledge, one way you can do so is by starting a blog. Since the main goal of this blog is to

become a sort of a bridge between your business and your customers, it is still a business blog, not a personal blog.

Niche blog

If you would like to divide blogs based on the topics, this is done through niche blogging.

Niche is a broad term used to signify a calling, vocation or opportunity. In terms of marketing, niche represents a specific topic you are focused on. When it comes to niche blogging, those are the blogs that deal with one particular topic. Niche blogs can be both personal or business. They are divided based on the topic.

When you start a blog, you should determine your niche. It will help you design your blogging strategy with more success and think how to implement content in order to attract your target group efficiently.

Types of content

When starting a blog, it is helpful to know some of the content types that are available. It is also recommended to use multiple content types on your blog. Not only would this provide a dose of diversity, but it would also enable you to explore which content types work best for your blog and audience.

How-to article

The goal of these articles is to answer the question how to do/understand/use, etc. something. They are instructional and practical.

Ebook

If you have quite a lot to say about a topic, or you wish to present an elaborate analysis of a particular concept, an ebook is a perfect way to go. It can be published on your blog, but it is usually provided as downloadable material.

Guest post

When you write an article that is going to be published on another blog, this is a guest blog post.

List

This type of content is very popular for blog posts, as it is quick to skim through it and easy to consume.

Slideshares

When you want to create content in a form of a presentation, this is the type to use. It is very useful for presenting statistics, definitions, key findings, etc.

Case study

The product of research and analysis is presented within a document called case study. It is a perfect format for presenting market studies, poll results, etc.

Podcasts

Podcast is an audio type of content, which is growing in popularity. It is an interesting way to present your content or interview someone. Podcasts are quite handy for people on the go.

Interview

Interview is a type of content that can be presented in a blog article, in a podcast, or even in a video. It features opinions of the people other than you, so it is an opportunity to provide a bit of diverse content and fresh information for your readers.

Other content types include summaries, reviews, giveaways, FAQs, mind maps, press releases, photo galleries, timelines, surveys, quizzes, etc.

While on the topic of content types, it is worth mentioning these as well.

Evergreen content

Evergreen content is a type of content that is always relevant for your target group. It offers a value that does not fade over time. It is about the topic that is constant and does not change frequently.

The main benefit of evergreen content is that it does not lose value over time. It is created once and generates visits in the years to come. This represents less work for the blogger while keeping the traffic coming.

Some examples of evergreen content include:

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Definitions
- How-to articles
- Tutorials

- Resource lists

Even though the evergreen content is valuable and informative in the long run, it is still necessary to keep an eye on such content and make the adjustment when and if needed.

Another thing to have in mind with evergreen content is to make sure this content is available to the blog visitors. Since blog articles are displayed in reverse chronological order on your blog, evergreen articles might end up buried deep in your blog even though they provide a lot of value, especially for the new visitors. One way to prevent this is to create a top posts section, a section with recommended posts, or a "Start here" page.

Compounding blog post

Compounding posts represent a great value for a blog because their principal characteristic is that they bring organic traffic over a considerable period of time, and that traffic increases to surpass the initial traffic the post receives when it was first published. Sometimes compounding posts make a considerable portion of overall organic blog traffic, which is why they are so valuable to a blog owner.

Besides the characteristic that their traffic surpasses initial traffic, other things that differentiate a compounding blog post include:

- The blog post answers the specific (and common) question
- It covers a topic broadly with lots of helpful details and information
- It is SEO-friendly
- The blog post has a title with the words *how, what, why, best*, etc.
- It is structured well, to highlight the particular segments in a reader-friendly way

Content formats

There are four content formats you can use on your blog. Bloggers often use multiple content formats. You can even see blog posts that combine multiple content formats. The goal is to use provide diversity in terms of content formats to increase the performance of the blog post.

Written content

Written content represents the largest percentage of blog content. Blogging first started with written content being shared with online users. This kind of content contains the main idea, it represents the topic and showcases what the blogger has to say about the topic.

Due to the content saturation on the internet, other content formats are also used to provide a more interactive experience.

Visual content

A blog post with visual content is said to perform better than a blog post without visual content. The main purpose of the visual content is to attract the attention of the readers and to illustrate the crucial ideas presented in the written content.

Different types of visual content can be used in a blog post:

- Images
- Graphics
- Infographics

Audio content

The most popular form of audio content is a podcast. Podcasts feature content in an audio form, which is very convenient for people to consume when on the go, especially for mobile users. When blogging, you can use this content format to repurpose your articles. In this case, you give a visitor a choice of reading the article or listening to a podcast with the same content. Interviews are also a popular topic in podcasts. Instead of podcasts, audiobooks can also be an interesting content format to offer to your blog visitors.

Video content

This type of content has been growing in popularity over the past few years. There is a growing trend to use video in online marketing, and bloggers are also starting to explore this strategy. Unlike written content, video content is more engaging and can be consumed on the go, which makes it quite convenient for the contemporary online users.

This is how another type of blog, called a vlog, was created. A vlog is a blog in a video format. It is usually shared on a platform that enables video uploading, such as YouTube. Still, a vlog can be a part of a blog post. Besides vlogs, a blog post can contain other types of videos, such as reviews, tutorials, presentations, etc.

Knowing about all of the content types and formats enables you to have the whole picture in mind when planning your blog. Most bloggers use written format and choose regular blog articles, but having in mind that there are so many different options will help you diversify your blog content and offer something for everybody. Once your blog is up and running, you will also use statistics to determine what kind of content is the most popular among your target group.

3

Blogging Platforms and Hosting

3. Blogging Platforms and Hosting

It all starts with a plan. You will need to create a comprehensive plan to keep your blog organized and focused on your goals from the start. This also helps you prepare everything needed for your blog to go live.

The first step is choosing a blogging platform.

What is a blogging platform?

A blogging platform is software used to create a blog. It is a content management system (CMS). It enables the blog owner to access an online dashboard, add content, manage the existing blog content, and customize the appearance of the blog's front-end.

So, there is a back-end, often called a dashboard, that requires special login details for the blog owner to access it. Other people who might have access to back-end include developer(s), content creators, editors, moderators, etc. Anyone who is going to help with blog management needs to have access to the back-end.

The front-end represents what the online users see. It is the blog layout available to the public. Online users access this content when they visit the blog URL. Depending on the blog type and features the blogging platform supports, users can interact with the blog through different actions, other than reading. Those include commenting on the blog posts, listening to a podcast, downloading the materials, logging in to the members' area, etc.

When creating a blog, you will have a choice between several types of blogging platforms. Here is a brief overview of the features most popular of them provide:

WordPress

This one is the most popular blogging platform on the internet. It is extremely user-friendly, it is flexible and customizable, so it represents a great solution for starting a blog. It is also SEO-friendly with plenty of optimization options. This will also be the platform used to illustrate the process of setting up a blog in this ebook.

When you decide to use WordPress platform, you will have to choose between two types of WordPress blogs.

WordPress.com

WordPress.com is a completely free blogging platform, without any need to have hosting or take care of any software installations. All you need to do is to create an account and you will immediately get access to your blog dashboard. Besides the blog name you choose, the blog URL will also contain .wordpress.com extension. Paid upgrades are available, such as domain registration allowing you the possibility to customize the blog URL.

WordPress.org

With this solution, you will need to provide your own website hosting space. Then, you go to wordpress.org and download the free software. The next step is software installation on your web server after which you will get access to your blog dashboard. You will also need to register your blog domain with a company that provides this service. Even though costs are involved, WordPress.org provides a more flexible solution then WordPress.com. It still is quite user-friendly and SEO-friendly platform, and the dashboard is pretty similar to the free version. However, additional options are unlocked, as well as the possibility to completely customize the platform and integrate new features.

Joomla

Joomla is a CMS platform available as a self-hosted solution. This means that hosting and domain name are required. However, the platform offers a lot of flexibility and customization options. Unlike WordPress, it has fewer users, fewer themes, and plugins.
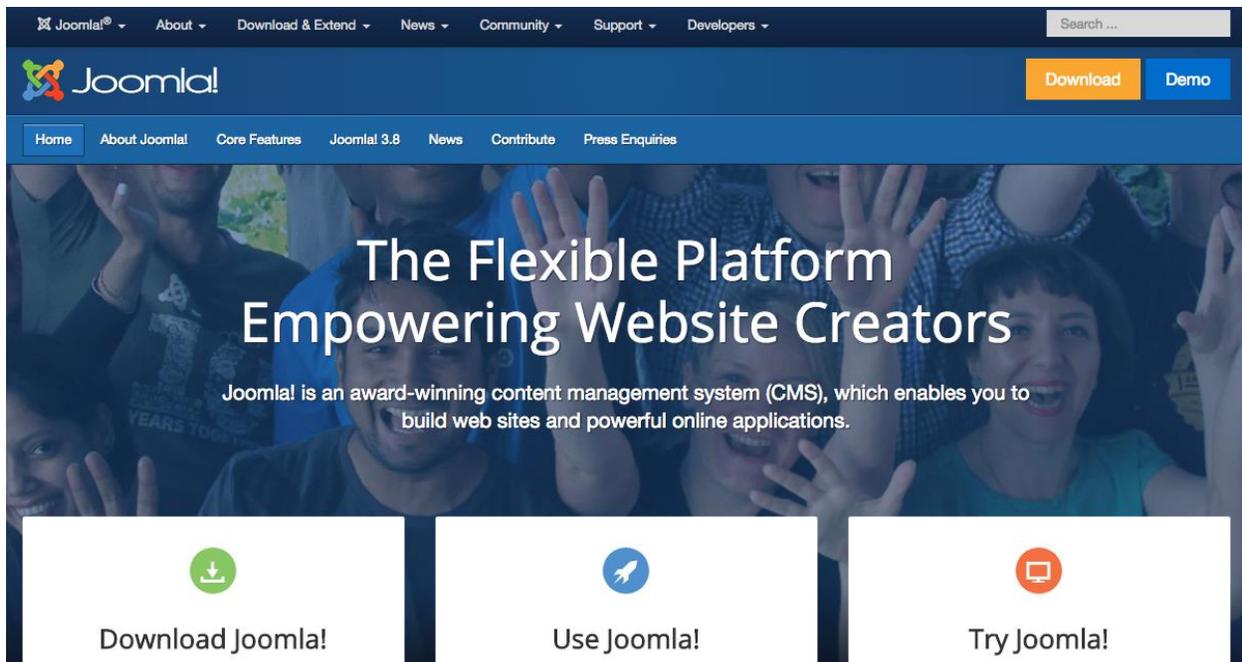
Squarespace

Advertised as a website building solution for small business owners, Squarespace offers a simple way for beginners to start creating their online presence with drag and drop features and predesigned templates. Domain name server can be purchased as an additional service. The main limitation of this platform includes the fact that you can only use features that are built-in, without too many possibilities for customization. This is a paid service with two payment plans to choose from: Personal (from $12 per month) and Business (from $18 per month).
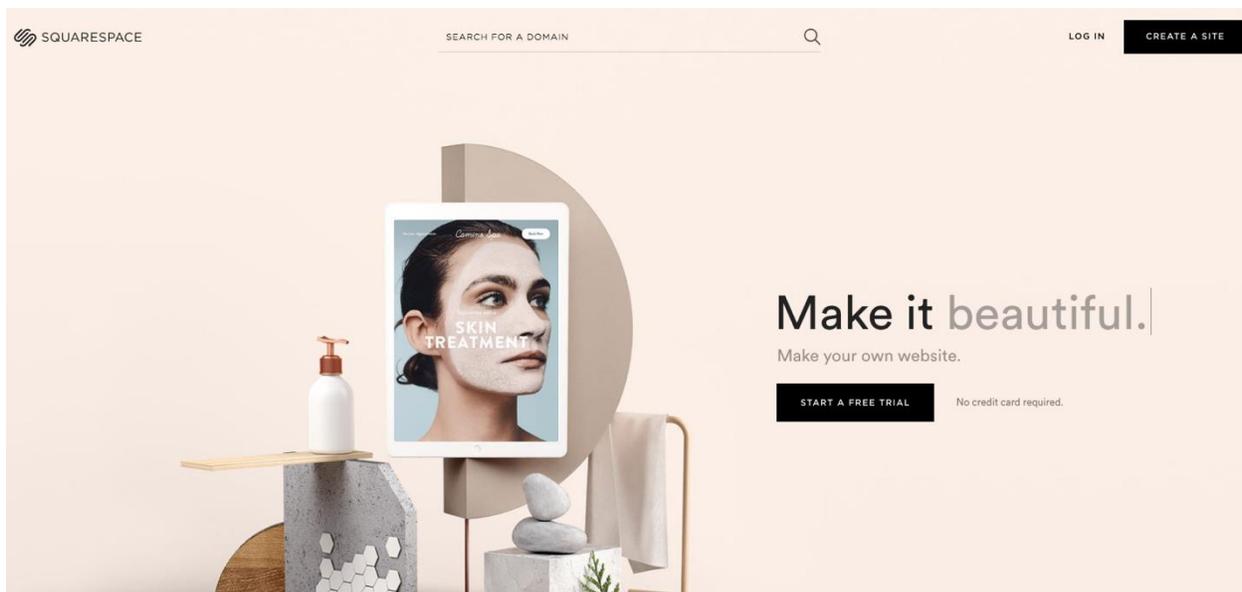
Blogger

Blogger is a free hosting service provided by Google. It is easy to use, and it represents quite a secure and reliable platform. However, the tools are pretty limited, as well as templates. Like with all hosted blogging platforms, the flexibility and customization options are rather limited compared to self-hosted solutions.
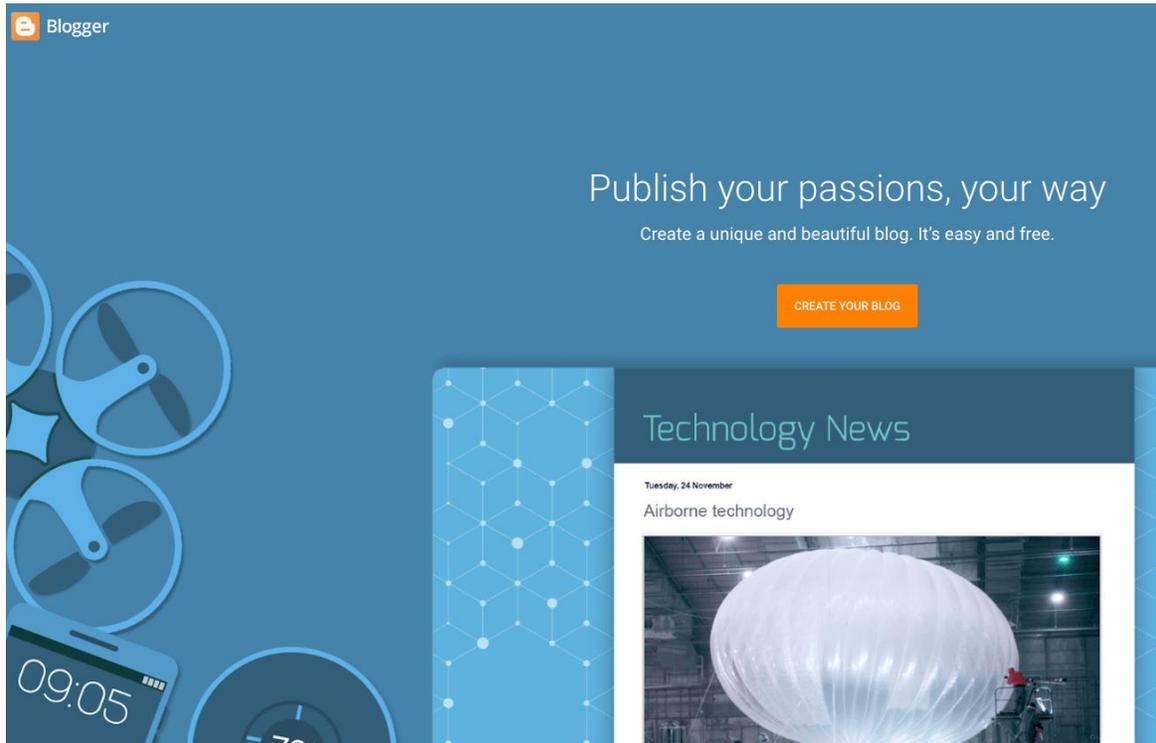
Wix

Offering a hosted platform for building a website, Wix is very simple to use, as drag and drop tools are very user-friendly. It is primarily used to build a website, after which you will need Wix Blog app to set up a blog. A free solution is rather limited, but the company offers premium plans, starting from $4.50 per month with advanced features such as an online store, form builder app, site booster app, etc.
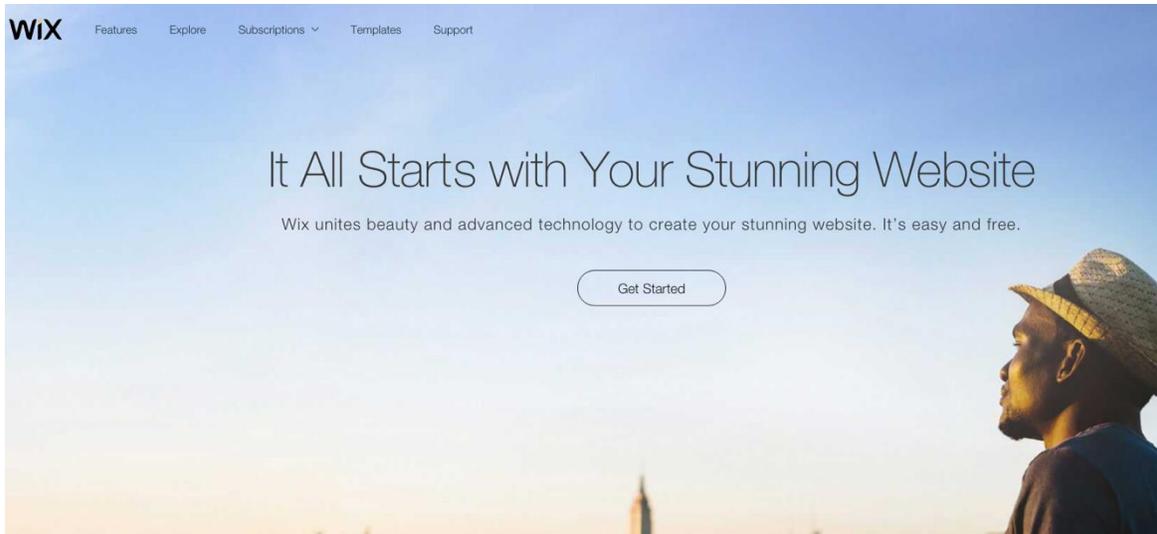
Medium

[Medium](#) is a free online blogging platform, extremely easy to set up, without any coding or technical skills required. The focus of the platform is writing, rather than blog design. This also means that the number of features to customize the blog is pretty limited. It provides access to the online community of people who are already a part of the platform. No paid features such as hosting or domain registration are available at this moment. There is a possibility to become a member (paid upgrade) to unlock unlimited access to in-depth stories and a possibility to reward the stories.

Tumblr

Like Medium, [Tumblr](#) is also a sort of social media oriented blogging platform. It is a type of microblogging, with an easy blog set up, sharing tools, and support for different content formats. The platform lacks advanced blogging features, so this might become a limitation as your blog grows.
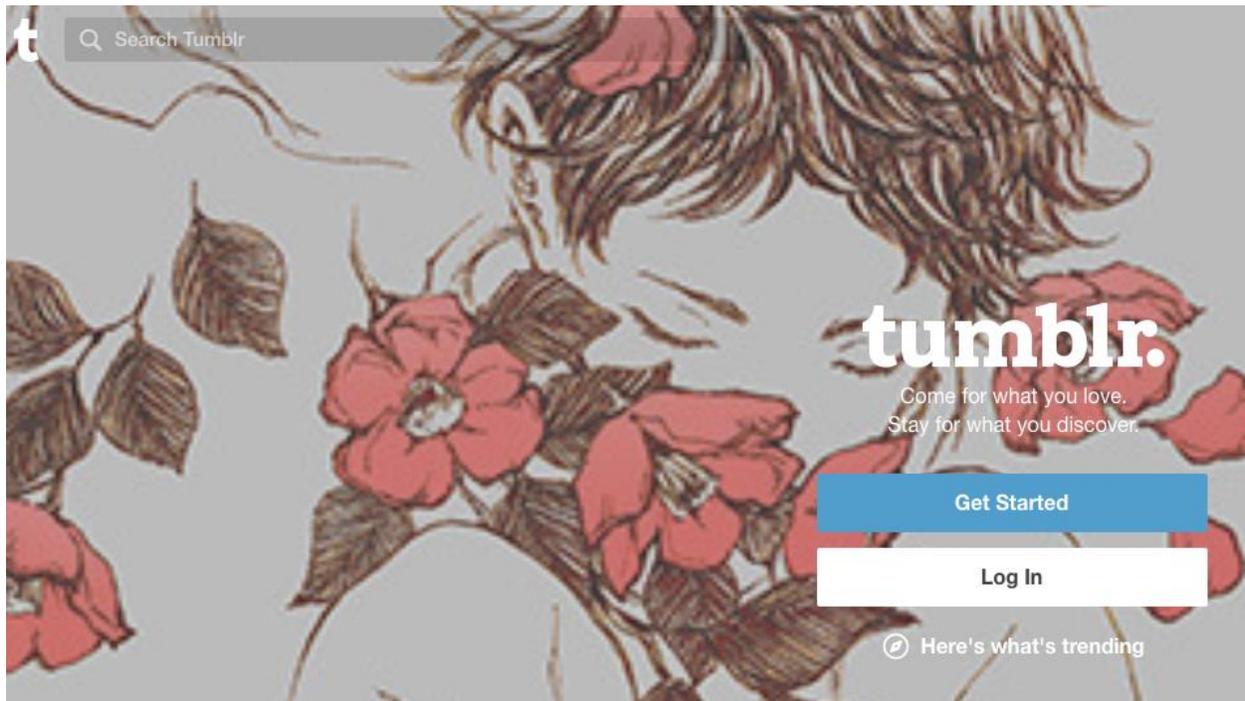
How to choose a blogging platform?

As you explore the internet, you can find even more blogging platforms, such as Weebly, Ghost, etc. The options are vast, but at this point, you need to make a decision regarding which one is the perfect choice for you.

Self-hosted vs. hosted

First, there is a major distinction between self-hosted and hosted services.

Hosted blogging platforms

Choosing a hosted blogging platform means that your blog will be hosted on the server of the company providing this service. For example, if you choose Blogger, your blog will be hosted on Google's servers. This means that you do not need to take care of server installation and management. Everything is done for you. And everything is free (Blogger, Medium, Tumblr, etc.) or paid as a membership (Squarespace) which depends on the platform. You will not need a web

developer. These are huge benefits for someone who is only starting out and might be intimidated by all of the technical stuff related to setting up your blog.

Still, you need to have in mind that as much as this sounds like an easy way out, in the long run, it might become a problem for you. Hosted platforms come with lots of limitations such as:

- No possibility to customize domain name

- No or few customization options

- A limited number of templates

- No possibility to optimize the server

- A limited number of add-on features

- Inability to monetize the blog through ads or affiliate links

While these might seem acceptable limitations at first, if you expect your blog to grow, perhaps it is time to look into what self-hosted blogging platforms offer.

Self-hosted platforms

The main advantage of self-hosted platforms is that they are completely customizable and flexible. You can install and optimize them to support your vision and create a unique online presence. WordPress.org is the most popular self-hosted platform. When you decide to go for this option, you will need to have your own server where the blog will be hosted. Once you set up the blog, you will be able to choose from a variety of blog templates. If you have coding experience, you can use it to optimize the platform even more.

Some drawbacks you will need to have in mind when choosing self-hosted blogging platforms include:

- You will have additional costs of hosting and domain

- More complicated installation and setup process (not too complicated though)

- You might need to hire help (a developer, web designer, etc.)

The reason why self-hosted platforms are a good fit, even if you might need help at first, is the fact that they can grow as your blog grows. They support a lot of plugins, add-ons, and customizable templates. You will also have more freedom to monetize your blog with different tactics as there will be no restrictions in this regard.

Online community

The online community represents the number of users who use this particular platform. For example, the WordPress platform is known to have a large and quite vocal community. What this means is that you will find lots of support forums and online groups that can help you troubleshoot some issues that might pop up on your blog. It also means that this platform provides the great selection of plugins, extensions, and templates.

While this is not necessarily a deciding factor, it is quite helpful to know that you can expect support from the online community.

Features and plugins

When you start a blog, you should have a clear vision of what you want to do, what kind of content you want to share and how you want to present it. Knowing this helps you with choosing a blogging platform because you will have in mind the features you need. Self-hosted platforms come with a specific set of features which are built into the core platform, but the main benefit is that plugins are there to enhance the existing or install completely new features to your blog.

On the other hand, if you go for a hosted solution, the set of features that comes with a platform is usually constant, and unlikely to change much. This is why it is important to explore the features the platform provides and plugins that come with each of them. It is also worth exploring possible upgrades the platforms provide (such as Wix) even if those are paid options.

Pricing

Other criteria to have in mind when choosing a platform is the costs related to blog setup and management. If you do not have the budget, and you do not expect to monetize your blog, a free hosted platform could be your choice. You have to be aware that self-hosted solutions come with a monthly (or yearly) costs, which might vary depending on the company you choose to hire for these services. This is an expense that should be included in your business planning.

What is hosting?

To make a blog available to the online users, you will need to store blog data on a server. Servers are special computers used for storing websites and blogs and making those available to online users via the internet. Once the blog or website is made available online, it can be accessed through its unique URL.

When you decide to start a blog with a self-hosted platform, you will need to buy web hosting from a company that specializes in selling those services.

Popular hosting service providers for bloggers include:

- [BlueHost](#)
- [SiteGround](#)
- [InMotion Hosting](#)
- [WPEngine](#)
- [GreenGeeks](#)

Other hosting companies also provide hosting solutions that can be used for websites and blogs, which is why it is worth exploring and comparing the companies, the types of plans they offer and the types of features they include with each of them.

Types of plans

When buying web hosting for your blog, you will have multiple payment plans to choose from. Each hosting provider offers several payment plans, and the number of integrated features increases with more advanced solutions. The goal here is to provide a custom solution for different types of businesses.

Basic plan - This is a starting plan with the most basic features, usually recommended for small business owners and beginner bloggers. The limitations of this plan include the number of websites you can host, monthly traffic, storage, etc. These limitations can be overcome as the company usually offers a free upgrade to a more advanced payment plan.

Middle plan - With this plan, you can expect more features and fewer limitations regarding the number of websites to host, email accounts, storage, etc.

Ultimate plan - This one is designed as a professional solution, offering a full scope of services the company has to offer, which usually include advanced analytics, site backup, hosting privacy data, etc.

Some companies offer custom plans that fall in-between, and they usually create a specific solution for a certain type of owners. When you are making a choice, think about what you need at first. Which features would be able to sustain your blog performance in its initial phase? Then you can upgrade, as your requirements start to grow.

Types of hosting services

When choosing a hosting for your blog, it is helpful to know which types of hosting services you can choose from. There are substantial differences between them. For each of these types, companies offer a couple of payment plans.

Shared hosting

Shared hosting means that your blog data will be stored on a server with other websites and blogs. The advantage is low price, but the disadvantage is the fact that server popularity affects your blog performance as well. This kind of hosting is pretty straightforward to set up. Hence, it is an options most beginners choose to start with.

VPS hosting

Virtual Private Server (VPS) is a service where one server is used to store multiple separate servers which are divided virtually. It is a more advanced solution than the previous one. The price is still not too high, but you avoid the problem of having other site's popularity affecting your performance.

Dedicated hosting

With dedicated server service, you rent a physical server from a company to host your blog. In this case, no other websites would affect your performance or slow down your server. It offers a great level of control and flexibility. This one is the most expensive of the solutions, and it is recommended for large companies. Additional costs will include hiring a system administrator to help with server management.

WordPress hosting

Some companies that offer hosting services include a solution specifically designed for WordPress blogs and websites. It is usually a shared or VPS hosting which is already optimized for the WordPress platform.

What to think about when choosing a hosting provider?

Even though you might be faced with a lot of choices, choosing a blog hosting does not have to be such a difficult decision to make. All you have to do is to focus on your blog and your blogging strategy. You also need to explore the features the company you are interested in offers.

Here are some of the things you need to think about when choosing a hosting provider.

Blog transfer

If you already have a blog and you want to switch to another hosting provider, this option is very helpful. Having a free blog transfer will both save you time and money while ensuring your content remains unharmed during the process. Some companies offer this service to new customers.

The number of websites on the same account

Some hosting plans limit the number of websites or blogs you can host to one or two, while more expensive payment plans usually allow the unlimited number of websites. At the moment you are starting your blog, this might not seem as a relevant factor. Even so, think about ideas you might get to realize in the future. Or if you perhaps have another website or a blog. When the hosting provider allows multiple websites on your server, this means that you will be paying only one hosting solution to host all of your blogs and websites, rather than paying separate hosting plans for each.

Email from your domain

Most hosting providers offer this service for free, but it is something you want to check beforehand. Emailing from your domain means that you will be sending an email to your subscribers with your domain name address. It is great for building trust and reputation. The hosting plan you choose might have limitations regarding email, so make sure you check the number of email addresses you can register, email storage, client access, and email protocol.

Backups

Backups are essential when it comes to keeping your work safe. Some hosting companies offer regular automated backups for free, which is an amazingly useful service. Otherwise, you will get an option of one-click backup tool or be required to pay extra for the service. Regardless if you choose to use a hosting company to help you with backups or you do backups manually yourself, always make sure you have a backup strategy in place.

Control panel

Control panel is the interface you get access to when you access your hosting and manage it. You will need login details to access it. cPanel is the most commonly used solution, and it is something you should have if you want to easily manage your blog hosting.

Sign up price and renewal price

This is a major thing to consider. Do not be lured by pompous offers of having your blog hosted for as low as a dollar. Hosting companies offer exclusive signup rates for the first-time customers. This price is for a month or a year, depending on your hosting plan. After that promotional period is over, you will have to pay the renewal price, which is a full price without any discounts. So, when comparing the prices of different hosting companies, always make sure you check the original price, without discount, because that is the one you will end up paying later on.

SSD

Solid State Drive (SSD) is a type of hard drive which is up to 3 times faster than a normal drive. When your website is hosted on such a drive, it will load faster. Since this is a factor influencing your blog performance, you might want to explore this feature if the company offers it. It can be a feature you decide to pay for separately.

Storage and data transfer

The most basic plans can be limited in terms of storage and bandwidth. This can be a rather limiting factor because storage available on your disk space represents a fixed amount of content you can store before all the space is occupied. The same goes for data transfer, i.e., bandwidth. In essence, this represents the number of visitors the server can handle. Each time someone visits your website, a certain amount of data is sent by the server to show the blog. Due to a lot of visitors, you might exhaust the bandwidth before the month's end. Hence the reason to go for a plan with unlimited bandwidth if you have a lot of visitors.

When starting from scratch, even the most basic plan with its limitations might suffice your blog presence, but always make sure that the advanced payment plans come with more or unlimited amount of storage and bandwidth.

Reliability and uptime

Reliability of your hosting provider is a determining factor when choosing which one to use. Great reputation on the market and excellent customer reviews are all indicators of how reliable a hosting provider is. Another indicator is uptime. Hosting providers usually guarantee a specific uptime, which represents the time during which the server is up and running. In the beginning, this might not be a crucial factor for you as a blog owner, but if you plan to make a living through blogging and turn this blog into a business, you need to think about providing a blog which is available to the visitors all of the time. Not only can downtime jeopardize your blog reputation, but you might end up losing valuable visits and sales. Here are industry standards regarding uptime of web hosting ([Source](#)).

- 98% uptime = server may be down 28.8 minutes a day

- 99% uptime = server may be down 14.4 minutes a day

- 99.5% uptime = server may be down 7.2 minutes a day

- 99.9% uptime = server may be down 1.44 minutes a day

Restrictions

Terms of service is a document that regulates the relationship between you and a hosting provider. Since you agree to these terms of service once you become a client, it is advisable to read this document. Restrictions usually refer to the type of content that is prohibited on the company's server, cancellation restrictions, etc.

Support

Here is another factor that might not seem relevant at first. Only once the first issue arises will you realize the importance of amazing customer support. Hosting providers usually assist with support tickets, email, phone, or within their help center.

When making a decision regarding hosting, try to have all of these factors in mind. Remember that hosting is supposed to provide a secure place for your blog and its content. You want to choose a solution that is perfect for your current needs at the price that is within your budget.

4

Planning Your Blog

4. Planning Your Blog

The second part of your blog planning includes defining the basic details about your blog, as well as the creation of a blogging strategy. With this, you will have a comprehensive list of everything you need to start a blog.

https://www.pexels.com/photo/alphabet-arts-and-crafts-blog-conceptual-459688/

Name

Some bloggers find this to be quite an easy decision. They use their name, and that is it. Using a personal name as a blog name is definitely one choice you should consider, especially if you want to promote yourself and build a personal brand. The great thing is that it (probably) is unique and recognizable.

Alternatively, try brainstorming some ideas to come up with an ideal blog name. Start making a list of words as you respond the following questions:

- What is your blog about?

- Do you know any synonyms for these words?

- Are there any other words relevant to the topic?

- What are the names of your competitors (you might want to avoid these terms)?

- Start combining the words in phrases

- Use other tenses or word forms in the phrases

- Take a look at the list and think what would be a nice name (to be used as a domain name as well, to be used on social media, to be a part of a logo, etc.)

When you think about your blog name, you should not focus on this phrase only. Think beyond and imagine how this name would be implemented in your entire blogging strategy. Is it a name you will love using five years from now? Is it professional enough in case you decide to turn your blog into a business?

Domain

Domain, or domain name, is a specific part of URL used to identify particular web pages. It is a general recommendation that your domain matches your blog name. It is easier for people to memorize the URL and it is better for SEO.

Once you have the blog name, use a tool like [this one](#) to check if the domain name is available. In case the domain is not available, you will see alternatives that might give you some ideas to use a different domain or perhaps change the blog name altogether.

Each domain has an extension. The URL ends with a dot (after the website/blog name) and a domain extension. The most common extensions are:

- Generic extensions - .com, .net, .org

- Sponsored extensions - .edu, .gov

- Country code - .it, .dk, .de, .uk

- Custom domain extensions - .life, .blog, .club, .site

While choosing the name and domain, it is helpful to check if that name is available on other platforms as well. It is most likely that you will have a Facebook page, Twitter profile, or other social media profiles. Use the [namechecker tool](#) to check the availability of your blog name on different platforms.
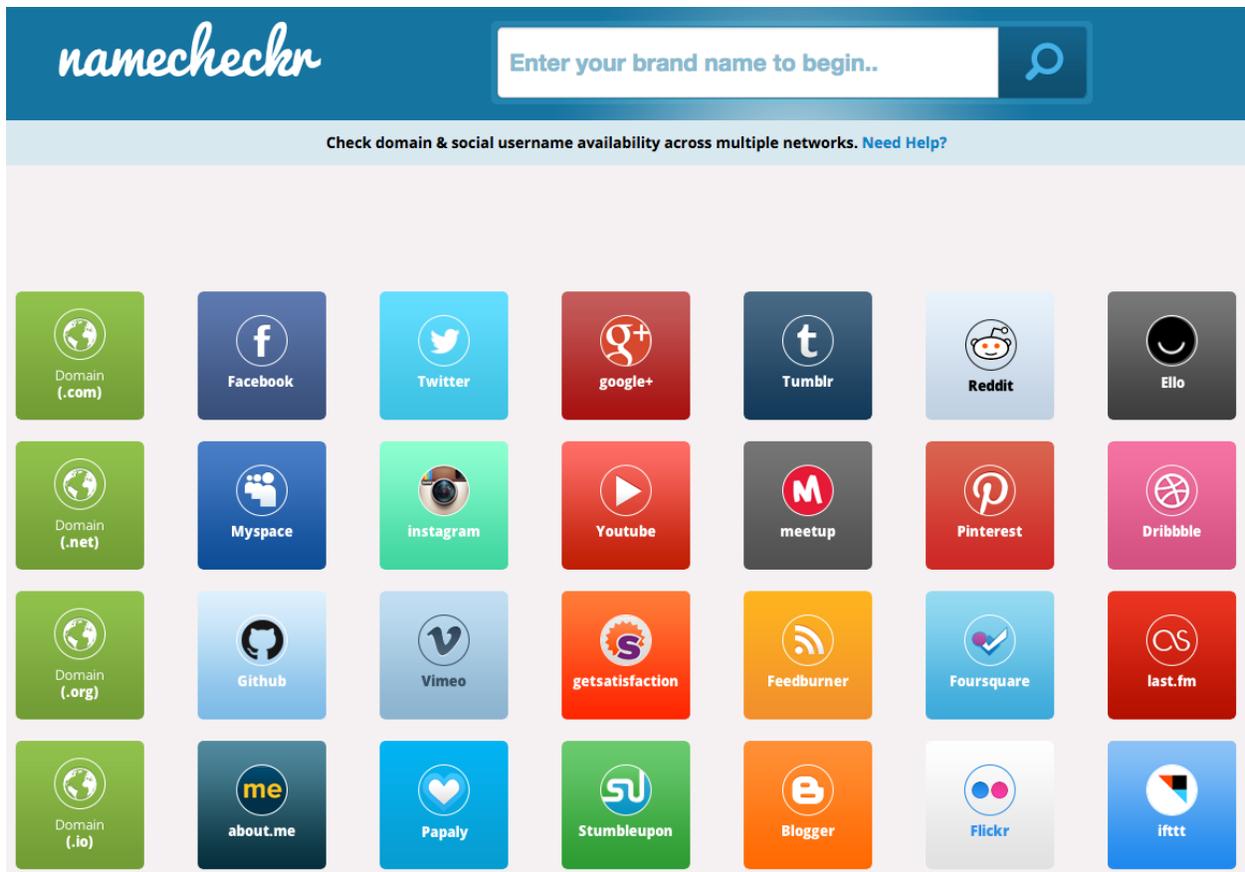
Logo and graphics

The next step involves a bit of creative work. Once you have a blog name, you need to come up with the visual content to present your blog. These are elements featured in one of these places (or all of them):

- Blog header
- Blog sidebar
- Social media
- Email templates
- Documents and other original materials
- Paid ads

One option is to design these graphics yourself. You will start with a logo and images for social networks. Currently, social network profiles require the following image dimensions:

- Facebook - Cover image: 828 x 315, profile image: ≥180 x 180

- Twitter - Header image: 1500 x 500, profile image: 400 x 400

- Instagram - Profile image: 110 x 110, image thumbnail: 161 x 161

- LinkedIn - Profile image: 400 x 400, cover image: 1536 x 768

- Tumblr - Profile image: 128 x 128

- Google+ - Profile image: 250 x 250, cover image: 1080 x 608

Many tools, such as Canva, Pablo, Photoshop, can be used for creating these visual materials. Alternatively, you can hire a designer to create these for you.

https://www.canva.com/
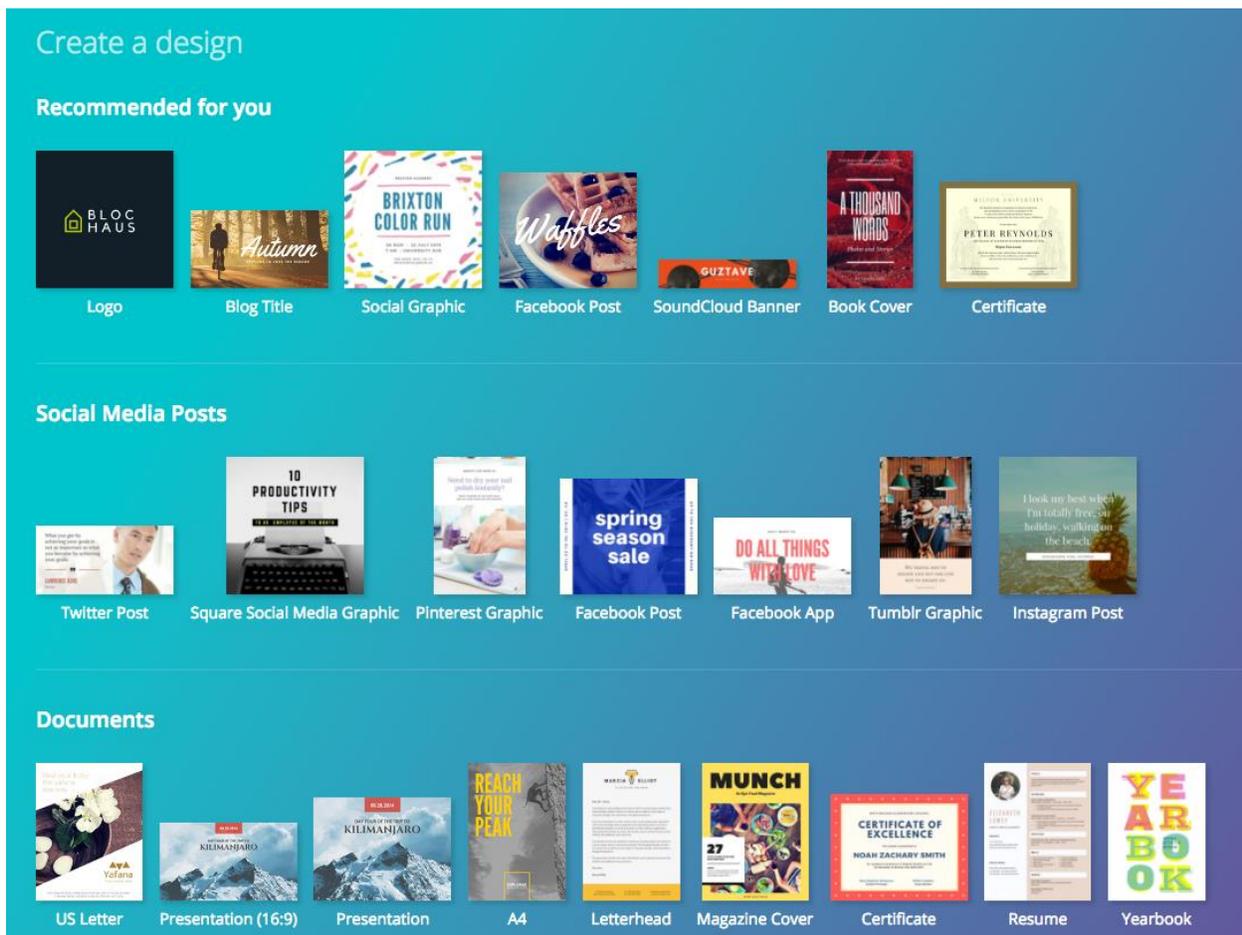
In both cases, it is essential to think about visual content that will represent your blog in the best way. It should be something relevant to the blog name. Have in mind that these images help you create your online identity. Online users will soon start recognizing your logo and relating it to your online presence.

Social networks

Once you have the blog name and the visual materials, you can go on to create social media profiles. As you know, there are so many different social networks online. Some of them are more popular than the others. Some are more suitable for certain blogs, while others might not provide enough exposure.

https://unsplash.com/photos/ubIWo074QlU
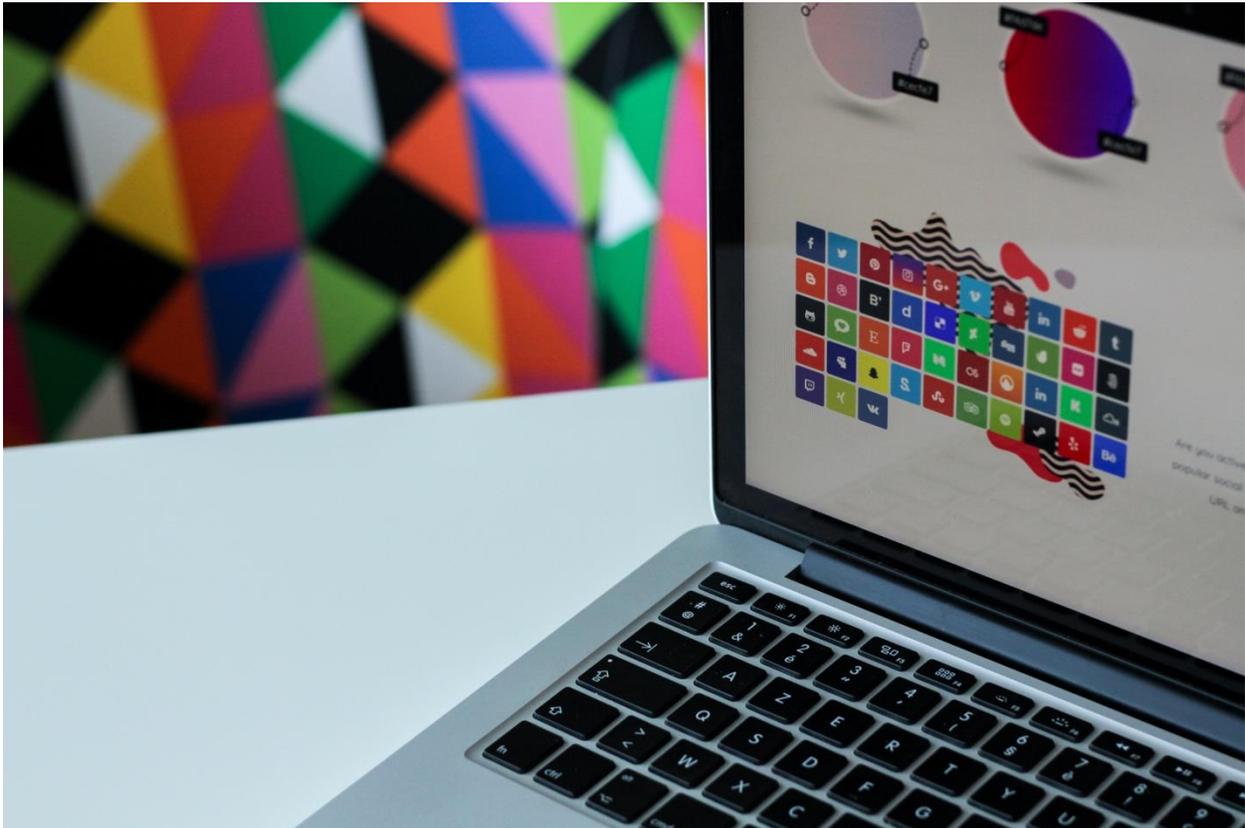
There is no rule that states which social network profiles you need to have. Instead, think about this:

Create profiles where the blog name is available

Even if you do not plan on using a particular social network, create profiles just to make sure you register your blog name. A particular network might grow in the future, or you might find new strategies to explore it. Finally, you prevent someone else from grabbing your blog name on that network.

Choose a couple of networks you want to be active on

Obviously, you cannot be active on all social networks. Not only is it time-consuming, but chances are that it is probably not worth the effort. Instead, choose a couple of the most popular networks. Due to their popularity, it is believed that they will bring most exposure for your blog.

Monitor the statistics to find out about the performance

As you start blogging, you will redefine your social media strategy and discover if you need to change your focus when it comes to social networks. Some social networks might not bring you any benefits, which is why you could skip posting on those.

Productive time-management

Have in mind that being active on social networks requires time from your part. Besides posting content, you will also need to respond to feedback, monitor the statistics, etc. Always make sure that social network you use actively is really worth the effort and that you are productively spending your time.

Blogging strategy

The points listed above make up the essential elements you will need to start a blog. Once you have all of that, it is time to think about what you want to do with your blog and how you want your blog to grow. Having a blogging strategy helps you plan everything and be prepared for the challenges that will occur along the way. It will also enable you to stay organized and have an approach that is always in accordance with your original vision.

Goals

Goals represent the activities you want to achieve with blogging. There can be a lot of different blogs, depending on the type of blog and content published on it. To help you keep things organized, use the following list to define your vision, as well as long-term and short-term goals you want to realize:

- What is the purpose of your blog? (e.g., help others, educate, share what you know, etc.)

- What do you want to achieve in one/two/five years? (e.g., turn your blog into a business, keep blogging as a hobby, hire an assistant, etc.)

- What are your monthly goals for the current year? (e.g., build your mailing list, generate [number] visits, publish [number] articles, collaborate with another blogger, etc.)

By answering these and similar questions, you actually get the exact goals you want to achieve. Always try to be realistic about what you want to achieve and how long do you think it will take you.

Content planning

Now it is time to focus on content planning. First, you have one goal you want to set up related to content planning as well. How often do you want to post on your blog?

Obviously, the decision is based on the amount of time you have (if you are the only blog author). Make sure you create a plan that you find comfortable. You want to make sure you provide extraordinary content, not a series of articles written in a rush just to keep up with the busy calendar.

The frequency of posting might increase or decrease over the course of time. You might get busier on other projects. On the other hand, you might expand your team, and you get other bloggers to write for your blog, which will then help you increase the frequency.

Either way, try planning this as a reference for content calendar and the evolution of your blog productivity.

Create content calendar

Content calendar represents the schedule you want to fulfill during a certain period. It is recommended to create this calendar monthly. Besides the dates for publishing, the content calendar can also contain the topic titles. The advantage of planning your topics in advance is that you get a full picture of content you will publish on your blog and how that content contributes to the realization of your global goals.

Determine content types

It is only natural to explore different content types. However, in the beginning, you might want to choose which ones to focus on. You also want to make sure you diversify content. So one week you publish a list, one week there might be an interview, etc.

Target group

Another relevant aspect of blog planning is defining the target group. Think about the people you want to reach. In your opinion, who will read your blog? Who will find it relevant and interesting?

Have in mind that you cannot aim to satisfy all of the online readers. It is impossible to create content that will appeal to all age groups, people from different regions, etc. Your target group

might be more or less broad, but it certainly is a specific group of people who have something in common.

Usually, you will define the target group by some of these criteria:

- Age
- Gender
- Location
- Language
- Behavior

Out of all these criteria, the behavior is the most diverse criteria, with lots of options to narrow down your target group. The behavior of the online users can be an indicator that they might be interested in your blog and the content you will be sharing. Here are some typical behaviors you can consider when defining the target group:

- Visiting a particular website/blog/page
- Prior purchases
- Expressing interest in a topic/service/product
- Having a hobby/habit, etc.

With this process, you aim to define the exact online users you want to reach. This will make your blogging strategy more focused on the people you are trying to reach. Your content will be adapted for them. Your online presentation will be the one they can relate to.

Promotion tactics

Although you do not have any content to promote yet, it is useful to think about promotion tactics in advance. These tactics include the channels you want to use to promote your blog content. Some of those are:

- Social networks
- Email marketing
- Paid ads
- Link building

Thinking about these in advance will help you focus on the things you will need to prepare. For example, you will need to work on building a mailing list to be able to use email marketing to promote your content. In case you plan on using paid ads, you will have to plan a budget for this promotion.

More promotional tactics and accurate explanations on how to use them are thoroughly explained in one of the following chapters.

Monetization

Blog monetization includes different strategies to earn money from your blog. When first starting a blog, you might not want to monetize it, but this might be a plan you will develop in the future. You can also start implementing monetization tactics early on. Either way, it is helpful to know that about different ways you can earn money from your blog.

Check out this topic in details, in one of the following chapters.

Even though you cannot predict everything, nor can you know in advance where your blogging will take you, it is helpful if you have some long-term plans in mind regarding your professional career and how blogging can contribute to it.

When making plans for your blog, try to be as specific as possible. Avoid generalizations and general goals. Having goals that you can actually turn into doable actions is what makes your planning successful, which eventually leads to the accomplishments of your goals.

5

Blog Design

5. Blog Design

The next step in the process of creating your blog is designing. And no, you do not have to be a professional designer to do this. You might need assistance from a designer along the way, but your primary task here is to imagine your blog and its pages. You need to imagine (and maybe sketch) where everything goes, how you want pages to look like, etc.

https://unsplash.com/photos/T6fDN60bMWY

Choosing a template

The choice of a template depends a lot on the type of platform you choose. Hosted platforms are very limited in this regard, so you can only use one template (for example on Medium), or you might have the option to customize an existing theme, such as the case with Tumblr. You can even alter HTML of your Tumblr theme.

Self-hosted platforms come with an extensive choice of templates you can install and then additionally customize. The first difference is that templates are either free or paid. When

choosing a free template, make sure it provides the latest updates so that you can keep your blog safe.

Paid templates include one-time payment (which gives you full license to use the template and eligibility for all the future updates) or recurring payment (usually with one-year access). The first option is more expensive, but it represents a one-time cost. It is an ideal solution if you have found the template you are absolutely satisfied with and plan on using it over a longer time period. If you are in the "testing" phase and you are not completely certain whether the template will be a long-term choice, you can go for a cheaper recurring payment. Some companies offer multiple themes with this recurring plan, which is another reason to go for this solution if you are still exploring templates.

Apart from the price, the second most important thing to consider when choosing a template is the layout. It is the way template looks like. When you browse through templates, you will notice a demo of the template, which shows you the mock-up pages. Typically, these mock-ups refer to the homepage content. Individual article pages usually feature a simpler layout than the homepage.
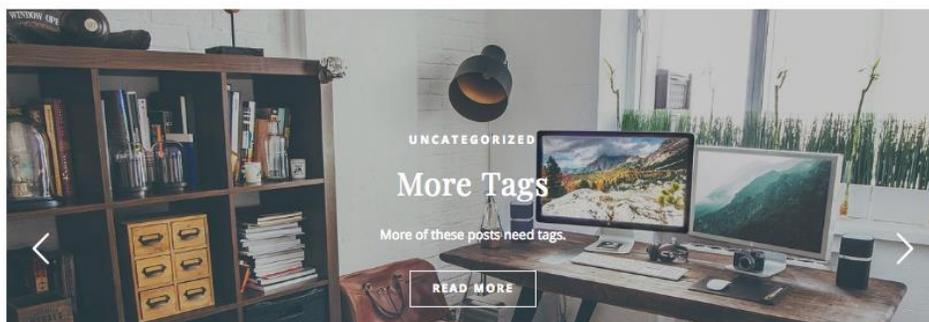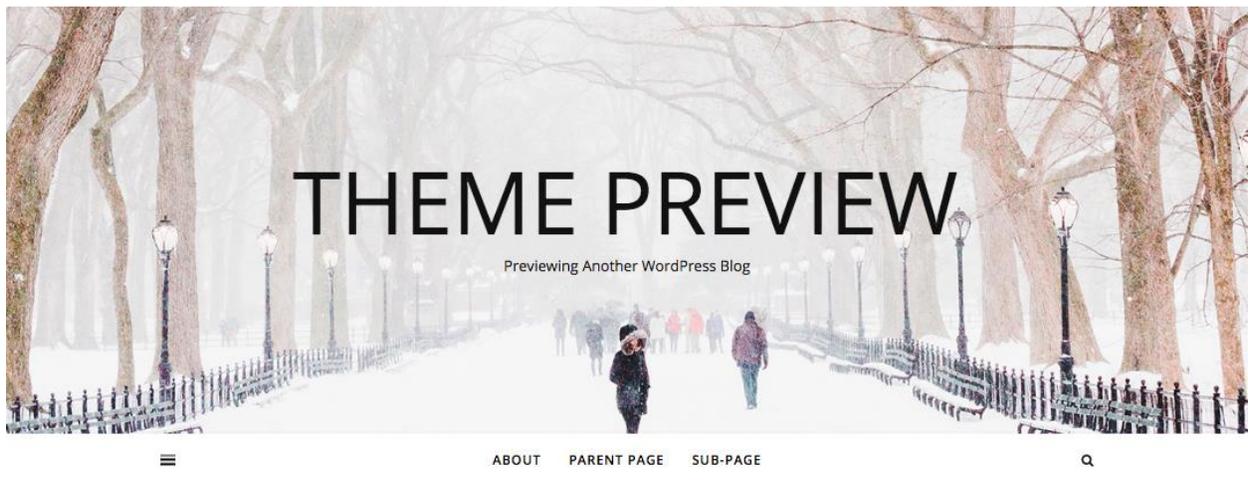
Here are a couple of commonly used template types:

One-column

One-column blog layout is a type of blog where there are no sidebars. There is only one column, and the content is prominently featured on the blog. This type of blog is commonly used for personal blogs where there is no need to provide additional information in the sidebar. Also, it is more suitable for blogs that do not have much content to display, as there is no easy way for the readers to browse through the content gallery.

Two-column

This type of layout is much more frequent as the sidebar provides the space for lots of useful information to be displayed. Typically, blog content occupies more than half the page, usually three quarters or even more. This kind of layout features content as the most prominent part. The sidebar is a narrow section of the page which usually features information such as:

- Blogger bio and image

- Subscription button

- Search button

- Archive

- Ads and banners

Three-column

With additional sidebar, this type of layout provides even more space for information other than blog content. Content is still the main part of the page and occupies half or even two thirds of the page width. An additional sidebar is especially helpful for displaying banners, AdSense ads, special offers, downloadable materials, etc.

Grid

The grid layout is a very flexible form of template layout which allows separating and rearranging the order of different elements to create a custom visual presentation. Elements such as rows and columns can be aligned using grid elements. Therefore, this layout is a way to go if you need lots of customization options and to present blog content in a different way than having a column layout.

Portfolio

When you create a portfolio type of layout, your goal is to present a variety of your best works that highlight your skills. Those are usually images and multimedia files, but written content can also be a part of a portfolio. It is a sort of your online resume, which is useful when you want to show off your work and find new possible projects or job opportunities.

Magazine

If you have lots of content, especially content which is distributed in multiple categories, you can choose a magazine type of layout for the homepage. With it, you use lots of boxes and fields that make the blog page looks like a homepage of a magazine. This layout enables you to feature a lot of content on the homepage, as you will probably show images and short snippets (or even titles only).

Blog pages

Once you have chosen the template, and you have the mock-up of what your blog is going to look like, it is time to take the next step. Depending on the platform, you will have some options to customize the template, choose different colors, upload images, add unique content, etc.

https://wordpress.org/themes/ashe/

When first creating your blog, think about the design of the following blog pages:

Homepage

It is an introductory page and also the main page. All of the other pages are actually subpages of the homepage. When someone looks up your blog name, the homepage will usually come up before all other pages. This page often has the highest page authority.

Interestingly, a lot of your traffic might skip the homepage. Social traffic and organic traffic from the search engines is likely to arrive at one of the article pages. For example, when someone searches for a term in the search engine, the relevant article from your blog has far more chances of being shown in the result pages than your blog homepage.

Having this in mind, it is important to provide a link to the homepage on all your blog pages. This provides an opportunity for visitors to discover more about you, as the homepage is usually more informative and provides details about your blog.

What to feature on the homepage

When thinking about blog homepage content, think about your visitors. There are different groups of visitors based on when and how often they get to your homepage:

- First-time visitors - People who discover your homepage for the first time.
- Second click first-time visitors - People who visit your homepage for the first time but they arrive from one of your internal pages. This means they liked the content and wanted to learn more.
- Returning visitors - People who have already visited your homepage.

With this in mind, you will design a homepage that has:

- Blog name (and logo)
- Menu bar (or drop-down menu) with essential information
- Eye-catching heading(s)
- Visual elements
- Featured content with links to article pages
- Most popular and recent content
- Links to social media
- CTA (such as a sign-up button)

About us page

About us (or About me) page tells your own story. It allows visitors to connect with you as a blog author by learning something more about you. It usually contains information about the blog author(s), including their experience, interests, etc.

When creating content on this page, make sure you write a personalized and creative narrative that will increase your credibility as a blogger and convince the visitors to keep exploring your blog, to start following you on social networks or signup for your newsletter. Hence the need to provide the relevant links for this to happen. It is also recommended to add your photo in this section.

Additionally, you could add testimonials to this page as well.

Start here page

This page can be quite similar to the about us page. In fact, some bloggers choose to replace about us page with this one. The idea is to provide information for someone who has just discovered your blog. If the blog is personal, start here page is pretty much equivalent to the about me page. It will provide more information about the person behind the blog.

However, with different topics, start here page could be a very useful resource, especially for the first-time visitors. It is the resource on how to explore your blog, which information one can expect to get, and how they can enhance their experience (by signing up, becoming a member, etc.). This section can explain how the blog is organized, which categories one can find, etc. The goal is to guide the visitors and to improve their experience.

Depending on your blog topic, you will decide whether this page is necessary.

Contact page

Lots of blogs have this page, and it was a common practice in the past to feature it in the main menu of the home page. This page contains essential information for the blog visitors who are interested in contacting you. The details which are usually listed on this page include:

- Name of the blog owner
- Contact email address or contact form (or even both)
- Social profiles
- Phone number
- Address

Even though these details are crucial, the actual page is not. Blog owners often decide not to feature this page in the main menu. Instead, the contact details are displayed as a part of about us page, or in the blog footer.

Other blog pages

The pages above are what all blogs have in common. Since blogs differ in the type of topic and content, there can be other pages as well. The blog owner needs to create a layout that is tailored to present the blog content, so additional pages might be helpful in doing so:

- Shop page - It is a link that leads to the page of your online store.

- Resources - This page can feature the most useful content and resources you have shared on your blog. Rather than in chronological order, this layout can be customized to offer only the most helpful resources.

- Pricing - If you offer services, and you want to promote them through your blog, you will need this page as well.

- Visit our website - This link takes the visitors to the homepage of your website if you have one.

- Lead generation page - Converting visitors can be one of your goals with blogging. If that is the case, use lead generation page to invite the blog visitors to a specific page where you can convert them (usually by encouraging them to signup or download something in exchange for their email address).

Main menu

Menus are located at the top of the blog page. They can disappear as the visitor scrolls down the page, or they can stay visible all the time with a fixed top part.

The purpose of the main menu is to provide links to the internal pages. Since the menus occupy the most prominent position on the homepage, it is recommended to display only the crucial information here. These usually include about us page, start here page, etc.

Once, it was common to place a link to the homepage in the menu bar. However, this practice is becoming obsolete now, because it wastes your valuable space at the top. Since the top of the page usually features the blog name or the logo (which are clickable and link to the homepage) having a link to the homepage in the menu bar seems redundant.

When it comes to the number of menus, there are no specific rules and best practices. Since you want to grab the attention of the visitors, and encourage them to browse your blog, you should try to limit the number of menus. The top limit would be between 6 and 8. Any more than that, and you will have a pretty messy main bar, which will also look quite overwhelming on mobile devices.

Creating menus requires structuring your website. You need to focus on enabling visitors to experience your blog in the best way, which is also user-friendly. You do not want them trying to figure out how to find the content they want. The blog structure needs to be intuitive and it needs to follow a logical pattern to make it user-friendly.

Categories

In the end, we have categories. At the moment you start your blog, you might skip having categories. It might seem redundant at first, as you do not have enough content to place in those categories. Even so, it is very important to think about categories from the start.

Just like with menus, categories help you structure your blog. In this case, the focus is on your blog content. Sooner or later, you will have a significant number of articles on your blog. Some users like exploring categories they are interested in, which is why it is useful to have this system in place. Also, it will be much easier for you if you organize your content based on categories. It will help you diversify blog articles and make sure you cover each category.

To decide which categories you should choose, explore your blog topic. Having a niche is helpful here because that is a starting point. From there, you should divide this into subtopics that you want to cover on your blog. For example, if you are going to start a lifestyle blog, categories you could choose are fashion, cooking, traveling, etc.

There are no rules regarding how many categories you need to have or should have. The only goal you should worry about at this point is to plan content and divide it into meaningful sections, which are called categories. As your blog grows, you might make some adjustment along the way, but the foundation for the blog structure should be set in the beginning.

Make a quick sketch

You do not need to be a designer or professional artist to do this. Just take a pen and sketch this idea of yours, with all of these details and all the pages you imagine to add to your blog.

Once you have all the details, you will be ready to start turning your vision into reality. And if you are going to need help, having a mock-up will be very useful as a reference for the person helping you design your blog.

6

Choosing Blog Plugins

6. Choosing Blog Plugins

A plugin is software that adds a certain feature to the computer program. In terms of blog management, a plugin enhances the blog with new features and allows a possibility for blog customization.

Plugins are usually available for self-hosted platforms as they allow blog customization and optimization. Unlike hosted platforms, which come predesigned with a fixed number of functionalities, when you have a self-hosted platform, your options are much more diverse.

The core installation of a platform such as WordPress comes with a certain number of functionalities. Plugins are used to enhance those features and create options for new functionality to become a part of your blog. Being the most popular CMS platform, WordPress offers the most substantial number of plugins. Currently, there are over 54 thousand WordPress plugins available.

It is also important to know that you will find multiple plugins for the same features. For example, if you need a social media plugin, you will find multiple plugins like that in WordPress plugins directory.

Choosing plugins

Plugins can be paid or free. Sometimes both free and paid alternatives exist for the same type of plugin. Ideally, you should choose a plugin based on how good and helpful it is. Even if the plugin is paid, this investment might be worth the costs.

Advantages

Starting with the pros, here are a couple of reasons why you should consider adding a particular plugin(s) to your blog:

Usefulness

Lots of plugins are very useful. They can help you optimize your blog post, compress images, monitor the statistics, automatically share content, etc. All of these tasks are vital for your blog performance, and thus they are a part of your routine as a blogger. Having those features automated and done for you is a great plus and good enough reason for you to install a plugin.

Time-saving

A lot of the tasks that plugins do, you can do manually. And you might do them at first like that. But as your workload starts to pile up, you will soon find out that plugins can save a lot of time. Automation tasks are a perfect way to save time and focus more on content creation instead of blog management.

Necessity

If you want your blog to grow and if you want to improve its performance over time, some plugins are necessary. While you might skip forum plugin, or similar features, a cache plugin, for example, is a necessity, as it improves the loading time, which enables you to boost your search engine rank.

Customization

Plugins are designed to help blogger achieve different goals. With them, you can completely customize your blog and use only the features that will help you promote your content and connect with the audience.

Regular updates

Companies that develop plugins provide regular updates for those plugins. This means that the software you are using can always be up-to-date helping you avoid your blog becoming vulnerable to spammers and hackers.

Disadvantages

There is no doubt that plugins can be quite useful and most bloggers use at least a few of them. Still, there are a couple of disadvantages you need to be aware of as well:

Blog load time

Although there is no limit regarding the number of plugins you can install, it is worth knowing that each plugin adds more information to your blog code. Eventually, this might reduce your blog load time. Messy codes are generally known to have a negative influence on blog performance. A general recommendation is to install only the necessary plugins and uninstall any plugins you are not using.

Security issues

At times, you might find a plugin that is not updated regularly or has some kind of a flaw in the code. These plugins may represent a security issue. To avoid these, always do research regarding the plugin you are interested in installing. Usually, you will find multiple plugins for the same

feature. Explore the reviews, the company behind it and check if they offer support. Check the current version, latest updates and other insights available for the plugin. All of these affect your decision and whether this plugin is worth installing.

Version:	4.0.3
Last updated:	1 week ago
Active installations:	5+ million
Requires WordPress Version:	4.0
Tested up to:	4.9.4
Languages:	See all 57
Tags:	akismet anti-spam antispam comments spam

Advanced View

Ratings   See all >

★★★★★
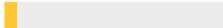
5 stars	774
4 stars	42
3 stars	10
2 stars	8
1 star	30
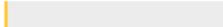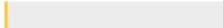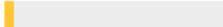
Support

Issues resolved in last two months:

5 out of 9

https://wordpress.org/plugins/akismet/

Plugins burden your blog

Some plugins might become a big burden for your blog. They might load a lot of scripts, add database queries, perform remote requests, and many similar complex operations that will have a negative impact on your blog performance. One way to prevent this is by exploring the specification document before installing the plugin.

Potential bugs

Plugins can sometimes create bugs with your CMS, especially when performing automatic updates of the plugins. Since generally, plugins are a piece of code that is added to your blog, updated plugin code might cause an issue with the rest of the code. Also, two plugins can have codes that together might cause bugs.

Combating these issues might be a little tricky. For starters, avoid automatic updates, and update plugins manually. This way you can notice the bug happening after the update, which means that it must be related to the plugin. Since these problems (if and when they occur) affect a lot of bloggers, you can explore the internet to find solutions, or you can hire a developer who can take a look at the code to find what might be causing the bugs on your blog.

Popular free WordPress plugins

Every blog is different and requires a different type of customization. As WordPress blogging platform is the most commonly used, there are some commonly used plugins you can consider adding to your blog. Again, always have in mind the reasons why you are installing a plugin. Just because you see a plugin on this list, it does not mean that you should immediately install it. Think about your blog and features you want to add to it, to decide which plugins you need.

The following list contains some of the most popular free WordPress plugins:

https://wordpress.org/plugins/
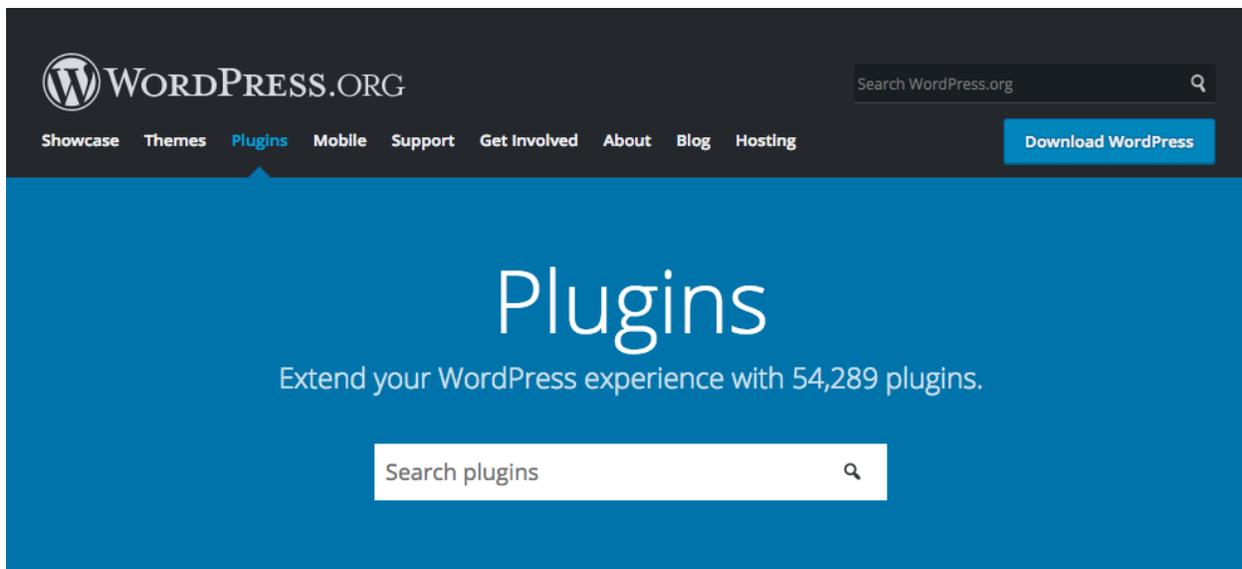
[Click to tweet](#)

This plugin allows you to create tweetable content displayed in boxes within a blog post. Not only do they attract the attention of the readers, but they enable them to quickly share your content on Twitter.

[Content Aware Sidebars](#)

Create widgets in your sidebar to customize your blog pages. Different types of sidebars are available, and they can be displayed on the specified pages of your choice.

[Popups by OptinMonster](#)

This plugin includes a form builder that helps you create opt-in forms for lead generation. Different type of campaigns can be created including pop-up forms, floating header, footer bar, in-line forms, mobile-specific forms, sidebar forms, etc. Increasing your mailing list is very important for your blog success, so you will probably test one of these lead generation tactics to encourage visitors to sign up. The plugin also integrates with email marketing services.

[Akismet Anti-Spam](#)

Moderating blog comments requires a lot of time and spam comments can negatively influence your blog. With this plugin, you have automatic filters and check for all your comments, preventing any spam or malicious content being published on your blog.

[WP Super Cache](#)

226

The purpose of this plugin is to optimize your WordPress blog, enable it to load faster and use server resources. It does so by generating static HTML files from the dynamic blog pages and most visitors will be served those static pages. This makes processing the visits much efficient because cached filed can be shown numerous times.

[Smush Image Compression and Optimization](#)

Use this plugin to resize, optimize, and compress images. Smaller image files will improve your blog load time, so this plugin (or other similar alternatives) can be very helpful.

[Redirection](#)

Redirections are a part of SEO. Beside better blog performance, these also improve the user experience. This plugin allows you to manage and keep track of all your redirections and to minimize the number of error pages displayed to the users.

[Contact Form by WPForm](#)

This drag-and-drop form builder enables you to create custom forms without any coding experience. Forms are useful for contact forms, subscriptions, payment forms, and similar.

[Instagram Feed](#)

If you extensively promote your blog on Instagram, this plugin will be quite handy to display your photos directly on your blog. The layout of the feed is completely customizable regarding width, height, number of photos, columns, image size, etc.

[WooCommerce](#)

This is a free ecommerce plugin that helps you integrate your online shop with WordPress. It enables selling physical and digital products, instant downloads, etc. There are premium extensions for this plugin with even more features such as bookings, memberships, recurring subscriptions, etc.

[Yoast SEO](#)

Perhaps one of the most popular SEO plugins, Yoast SEO comes with sitemap functionality, setting canonical URLs, title and meta description templating, internal linking, etc. The plugin is free, with premium extensions such as social preview and redirect manager available.

[Broken Link Checker](#)

Here is another plugin that helps you improve your blog in terms of SEO. Broken links negatively affect your website performance, so installing this plugin could help you keep an eye on any link that might be broken, and fix this issue promptly.

The Events Calendar

If your blog needs event scheduling, this kind of plugin can be helpful. It is customizable with multiple features to add events, use template texts, save venues, upcoming event list, multiple stylesheets, etc.

TablePress

Management of tables and content inside can be much more comfortable with this kind of a plugin. It enables customizing and embedding tables, importing from and exporting to Excel, CSV, HTML, etc.

Jetpack by WordPress.com

All-in-one plugin will help you with customization, marketing and security tasks for your blog. Features such as customization tools, lazy image loading for a faster mobile experience, site stats and analytics, backups, secure logins, and much more are all part of this plugin.

TinyMCE Advanced

Advanced text editor, TinyMCE comes with 15 plugins to enhance the existing editor. It includes configuring up to four rows of buttons, more options for lists, ability to set Font Family and Font Sizes, etc.

NextGEN Gallery

This WordPress plugin allows creating photo galleries, gallery management system, display albums, use effects, etc. All of this is very helpful, especially if visual content represents a large part of your online presence.

Facebook Widget

This plugin allows creating a Facebook widget to be displayed on your blog. It is easy to configure and includes options such as showing posts from the timeline, showing or hiding cover photo, etc. There are many more Facebook plugins that provide similar or different features, such as enabling Facebook comments, signup with Facebook, etc.

A full list of WordPress plugins can be found here: https://wordpress.org/plugins/.

The goal with the installation of plugins is to help you manage your blog with more success. You want to create a custom back-end of your blog allowing you to create, promote, and monitor the performance of the content.

It is also important to mention that installation of plugins does not need to be done in the beginning when you first start blogging. In fact, it is more likely to be done later on. Only once you start publishing content will you be able to figure out how you could increase the performance of that content with right plugins.

7

Creating and Publishing Content

7. Creating and Publishing Articles

When you have everything in place, when the blog is all set up, and you can access your blog dashboard, it is time for creating and publishing articles. This is the moment when you start populating your blog with relevant content. Assuming that you already have setup pages such as about us, contact us, etc. which require a special type of content, this chapter will show you how to create and publish your first blog articles.

To illustrate certain points with screenshots, WordPress platform is used as an example, having in mind that it is the most commonly used blogging platform. Other self-hosted platforms have similar options within their interface, so this chapter would be helpful even if you do not plan on using WordPress for blogging.

Creating an article

First, you start with creating an article. Most bloggers use another app or platform for writing content. Popular choices are Word (offline), Google Docs (online), Apple Dictation (it converts spoken words into text), Bear writer (mobile-friendly writing app), BlankPage (tool to organize and track your writing progress), etc.

Alternatively, you can write an article directly in WordPress, and save it as a draft until it is ready for publishing. To do so, go to WordPress dashboard, look up option *Posts* in the menu on the left and click on *Add New*.

When creating content, think about these:

- Type of content - As you explore content types, find the one that is perfect for the topic you are going to deal with.
- Reader-friendliness - At the same time, you should make your article reader-friendly. Instead of a massive chunk of text, use paragraphs, bullets, highlights, visual elements, etc.
- Audience - Thinking about your audience and how they will consume this article helps you define your voice, choose the style and how detailed you want to be with topic analysis.

Writing a blog post

This step is all about turning your creativity and idea into an actual blog post. To help you efficiently organize your ideas, explore these blog post elements. Use the list as a sort of a template when creating a blog post to make sure you do not miss or lose focus when writing.

Title

Some bloggers prefer to write the content and then settle on a topic, while others choose a title and use it as a guideline while writing. Still, there are those who start with one title, and as their writing takes them further, they decide to alter the initial title accordingly. Regardless the way you do it, it is essential that content you create really explains the topic of the article.

General blogging guidelines state that powerful titles:

- Have keywords

- Have numbers

- Have attractive adjectives

- Have call-to-action word

- Stir an emotional response (positive or negative)

Here are a couple of tools to help you with choosing a title:

- [Blog Title Idea Generator](#) - It generates ideas with blanks for you to fill in with relevant keywords, industry, etc.

- [BlogAbout Blog Title Generator](#) - Type what you blog about, and explore titles with blanks to fill in.

- [SEOProcessor Blog Title Generator](#) - You will need to insert a keyword and choose a term that describes your keyword before you get topic ideas you can write about.

Create an outline

Brainstorm the ideas regarding the blog topic you want to write about and create an outline you can follow. This outline will help you organize your ideas and make sure you cover all the aspects of the topic. The outline can sometimes consist of possible headings or core ideas that need to be covered in the article.

The outline also depends a lot on the type of content you are going to produce. For example, if you are creating a list, the outline can consist of the list items you will write about in the article. On the other hand, if you are creating a how-to article, the outline can include the course of actions you are going to discuss in order to explain the process of how something works.

Intro

The purpose of an introduction is to engage your audience. It should hint what they can find in the article and why they should continue reading. Offer a glimpse of the topic to spark interest. This section is also a part where the readers find out about your writing style, so make sure it is something they would love.

You can write the introduction at this point, but if you are having trouble putting down your ideas, you could leave the introduction for later. Perhaps when you write the rest of the article, you will have a better perspective on how to introduce this topic to the readers. Some of the popular tactics to engage the readers in the introductory section include:

- Presenting a problem (for which you have a solution in the article)
- Sharing a personal story (so your audience can relate to you)
- Expressing strong opinion (your audience might agree or disagree)
- Starting a story (they will have to read to find out how it ends)
- Shocking fact or statistic (one that is relevant to the article content)
- Set expectations (clarify what they can expect to discover in your article)
- Tell a joke (entertain your readers as you set up the casual/relatable tone of your article)

Content

When writing content, you will use the outline you have already created. It will help you write in segments and make sure you cover each of them with relevant content. Use the language that is relatable to your audience. You want to connect with them with a writing style that is fun for them to read and yet provides truly relevant and useful information. Using shorter paragraphs is recommended as they enable readers to follow the content with more success.

You will probably start writing about something you know. Even so, researching a topic online can provide helpful ideas, ones that you might not have thought off. Also, knowing what is out there on the internet regarding the topic might give you an idea regarding what is missing.

Finally, your own perspective on the topic is what makes your content unique. It allows you to structure the topic and present it in a way that is going to be most helpful for your readers. Have in mind that although there is a lot of content online, a large percentage of that content is useless, outdated, incorrect, insufficient, unoriginal, etc. In one word, it is junk. Your content needs to provide value and uniqueness to appeal to your audience.

As you start structuring sentences and paragraphs, you will soon find a flow to transfer your ideas into text. Should you ever come to a stop and think about different (or better) way to express your thoughts, here are a couple of tools that can help you:

- OneLook Thesaurus - If you cannot remember a word, try this tool to describe the concept and see related words. It is a reverse dictionary, where you look up words based on definitions, instead of looking up actual words and their meaning.

- Power Thesaurus - When you notice you are using the same words over and over again, it is time to look up synonyms or related words. Use this tool to do so.

- Twinword Writer - In case you get stuck on a word, this tool will analyze the context to show suggestions or alternatives. You can use it as a writing app. It is even available as a WordPress plugin.

Conclusion

The conclusion should summarize the key points analyzed in the text. It should wrap up everything and provide your final thought on the topic. Here are a couple of suggestions when writing a blog post conclusion:

- Restate your main idea

- Provide a "next step" suggestion

- Encourage the readers to comment

- Include a call-to-action (subscribe to your blog, ask a question, click on the related article, convert into a lead, etc.)

- Keep it short

Proofreading and editing

Writing is the first step. Proofreading and editing are the next one. Some writers do proofreading and editing immediately. It is generally recommended to postpone this for later, as you will allow the impressions to settle, and your view of the article will be more clear. This might be difficult when you are writing on a short deadline, but this would be another reason why content planning and writing in advance should be your top priority.

Proofreading is an excellent opportunity to examine your article and check if you have stayed on track regarding the topic. After you get some rest, you might think of some other ideas to add into content or you might decide that some points are just irrelevant to the article.

To proofread and check your text regarding readability and errors, you can use these tools:

- [Hemingway App](#) - The app highlights lengthy sentences, complex constructions and common writing errors.

- [Grammarly](#) - This is an automated grammar checker that highlights grammar and spelling mistakes, and shows vocabulary enhancements, plagiarism check, etc.

- [Ginger](#) - Ginger is a software that corrects typical grammatical mists, punctuation, sentence structure and style.

Most bloggers proofread more than once. The first time, you could check if there are some significant aspects you would change. The next time, you can consider reader's point of view, and whether the post is useful, engaging, etc. Of course, scouting for typos and grammar mistakes should be included in the proofreading as well.

Text editing comes after proofreading, and it helps you enhance the appearance of your article. The main goal is to make it more user-friendly.

These are the essential elements to include when editing:

- Highlight (or create) relevant headings

- Use bullets for lists or key points

- Make relevant text (words or phrases) bold or italic

- Keep paragraphs short and focused on a single idea

When editing the article, you should include the visual elements (if you have not done that so far). Visual elements can help you illustrate some crucial concepts and attract the attention of the users, which is why you should consider using them. Ideally, you will upload your visual content, but in case you share someone else's work, crediting the author might be a requirement.

Always make sure you have the permission to share content created by someone else to avoid copyright infringements.

Publishing the article

If you have used WordPress for writing, you are good to go. In case a writing app is your choice, simply go to WordPress dashboard, look up option *Posts* in the menu on the left and click on *Add New*. The first two fields you will fill in are *Title* and *Text*.
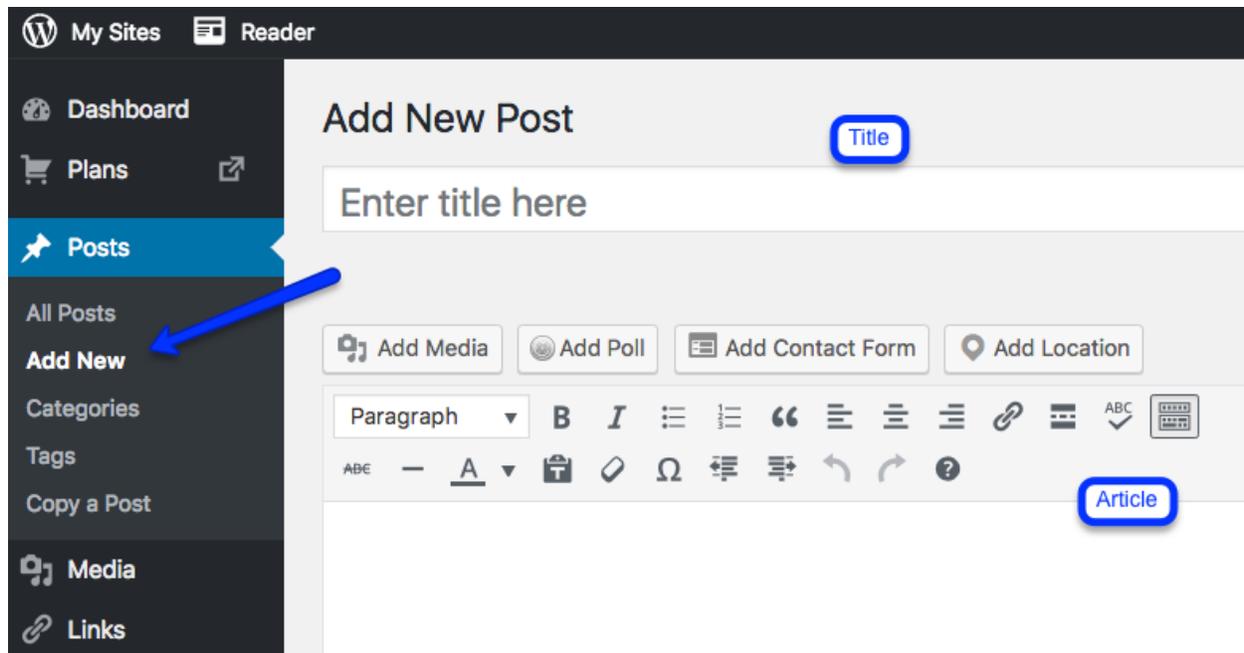
You will then add the text. Here you can see numerous options to format the text, add media, links, forms, etc. There is also an option to see the HTML of the article. The set of options you see here might defer depending on the platform and plugins you use, but essential features are always there.

Before you hit *Publish* button, there might be other fields you want to fill in. They are not all mandatory, but they offer very helpful options:

- Save draft - Use this option to save the article without publishing it.

- Preview - Use this option to check how an article will look like once published.

- Publish immediately or Edit - Here you will find a calendar allowing you to schedule the post to be published.

- Publicize - Use this feature to connect your social profiles and publish the article on connected profiles automatically.

236

- AMP - This option enables or disables accelerated mobile pages.

- Format - A couple of commonly used post formats are available to choose from.

- Categories - Sort your blog content by assigning a relevant category to each blog post.

- Tags - This is another option to sort your blog articles.

- Featured image - Use this widget to add a featured image to your blog post.

These publishing options are just the basic settings you will find. Plenty more exist which you can add with plugins and by enabling the right widgets in the blog settings. Use those options that are helpful and enhance the performance of your content.

8

How to Optimize a
Blog Post

8. How to Optimize a Blog Post

Search engine optimization is the process of optimizing a website in order to increase chances of it being shown in the search engine results. Each blog post contributes to search engine visibility and helps you position your blog pages, which is why optimizing a blog post should be your practice when publishing content on your blog.

When you think about optimization, you should consider three types of optimization, also called "friendliness".

SEO-friendly

Being SEO-friendly means that the content is created based on the search engine guidelines. This kind of optimization is done because of the search engines. Search engines have spiders or crawlers which discover and index new content on the internet. These spiders use tags to understand the content and thus connect it with relevant search queries. When a blog post is optimized for search engines, this means that it is SEO-friendly.

Title optimization

Start by optimizing the title. Use relevant keywords and make an engaging title that encourages clicks. Also make sure that the title adequately describes what is in the article, to increase the time the readers spend reading. Otherwise, they would quickly abandon your site, which can indicate the search engines that something is wrong with your page.

The title tag is an HTML element that is used to mark this segment of the page. Besides on your blog, titles are also displayed in the search engine results. They are clickable and they lead directly to the article page. That is one of the main reasons why the titles are important. Being a part of the result pages means that they have the power to get visitors to your blog.

General SEO guidelines regarding titles include:

- Use a keyword, at the beginning of the title if possible
- Include a brand name if you have a strong, recognizable brand
- Avoid all caps
- Recommend length is approximately 60 characters

Of course, you cannot always follow all of these recommendations for each title. For example, some titles will probably be longer than 60 characters. Even if that happens, it is important to have in mind that search engines will display only a part of the title in the search result pages (hence, the recommendation to aim for 60 characters). In this case, it is helpful if you have included the keyword in the beginning. This way, the online users are most likely to see that the article is relevant to their query.

Content optimization

Content of the page is another factor that affects page ranking in the search engine result pages. In terms of SEO, content needs to:

Provide value to the readers

This is reflected through signals such as average session duration, whether the user goes back to the SERP with the same query, shares, etc.

Be keyword-targeted

Apart from the title tag, the primary keyword should appear in the page URL, and in the text. Specifically, the keyword should be highlighted with some of the tags such as heading, bold, etc.

Be unique

Any duplicate pages or parts of text should use the canonical tag to link to the original page. This way the original page increases its value and visibility in the search engines.

Be accessible to the search engines

This means allowing search engine spiders to crawl and index the website, having an XML sitemap, etc.

Have meta description

Meta description is shown in the search results, so it an element you should add to the blog page. Try to include both primary and secondary keywords in the meta description.

Link to other pages on the blog

Pages that stand separately with no links pointing to them or outbound links are almost impossible to rank, because search engines use links to crawl new content. Make sure your blog page links to a category (if those exist) or to the homepage. Also, include other internal and external links, if they are relevant and helpful.

Image optimization

Images are optimized using Alt Text, also called alt attributes or alt description. It is an HTML tag that is used to add a context to an image. It is a descriptive text that explains what the image is about. This text will be displayed when the image cannot be loaded. More importantly, alt text provides a description for the search engine crawlers, assisting them in indexing the image.

There are several recommendations you should have in mind when optimizing images:

- Include a descriptive text that conveys the image message
- Keep it short (Usually, up to 125 characters of alt text is shown)
- Use keyword if it fits the context of the image
- Avoid keyword stuffing just for the sake of optimization because it will have an opposite effect
- Do not use phrases such as "*image of*", "*this is a picture of*", and similar
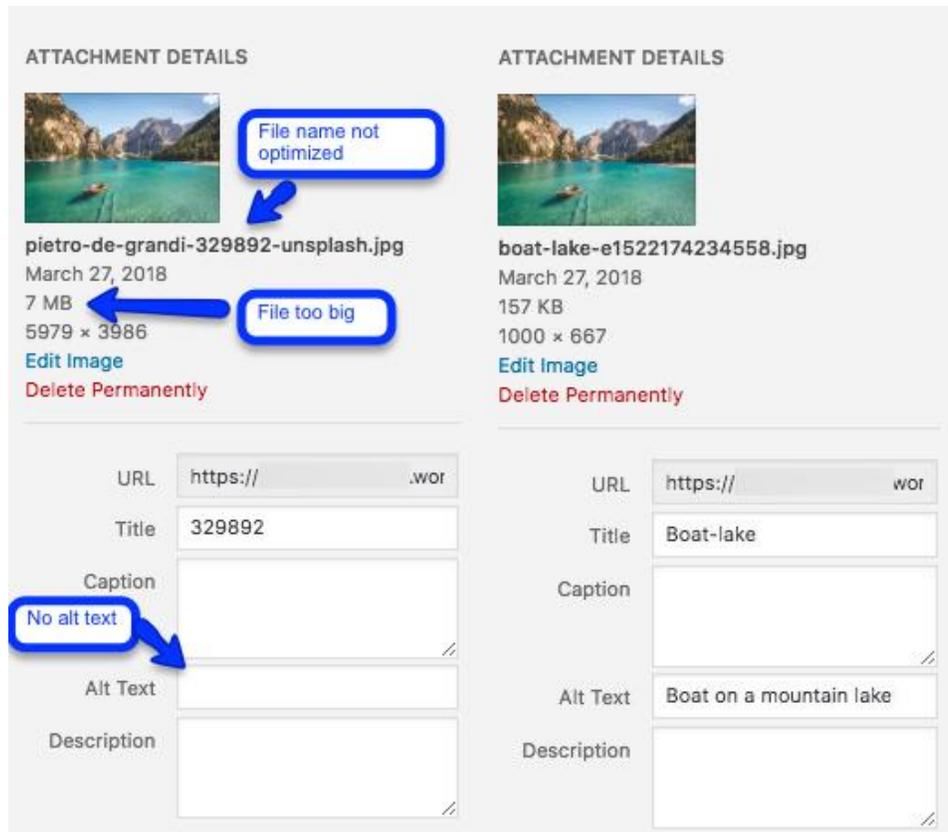
Not optimized vs. optimized image

Links optimization

Regarding link optimization, you have two groups of links to think about when you start optimizing your blog page. The first link is the actual link of the blog page. It is the page URL. When you add the post title, an automatic URL is created. However, you can edit this URL to create one that is more SEO-friendly. In fact, there are even plugins that do this for you.

Here are the SEO recommendations to have in mind:

- Make URL simple, relevant, and accurate

- Avoid using numbers, codes and funky characters (i.e., *%, &, {, },* etc.)

- Use lowercase to avoid confusing the search engines

- Remove stop words (such as *a, and, but, the*, etc.)
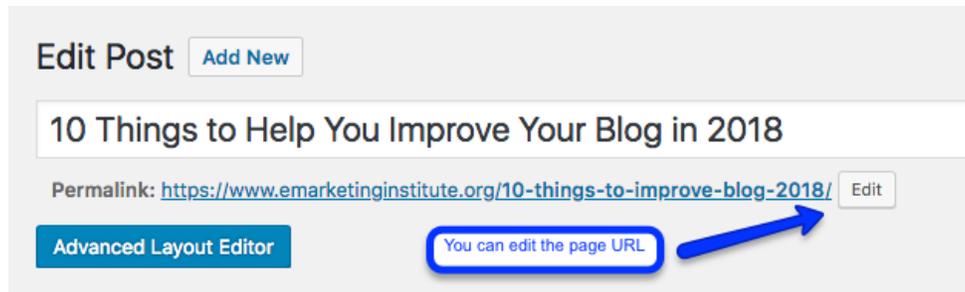
The second part of optimizing links includes the links posted in your article.

Anchor text represents the visible part of the hyperlink. It is a clickable word or phrase that links to a specific page, internal (another page on your blog) or external (another website or blog). Anchor text is usually in blue so that it differs from the rest of the text.

Regarding SEO, anchor text should:

- Be relevant to the page you are linking to

- Be descriptive

- Not be generic (such as *click here, source*, etc.)

- Not be the same each time you are linking to a certain page
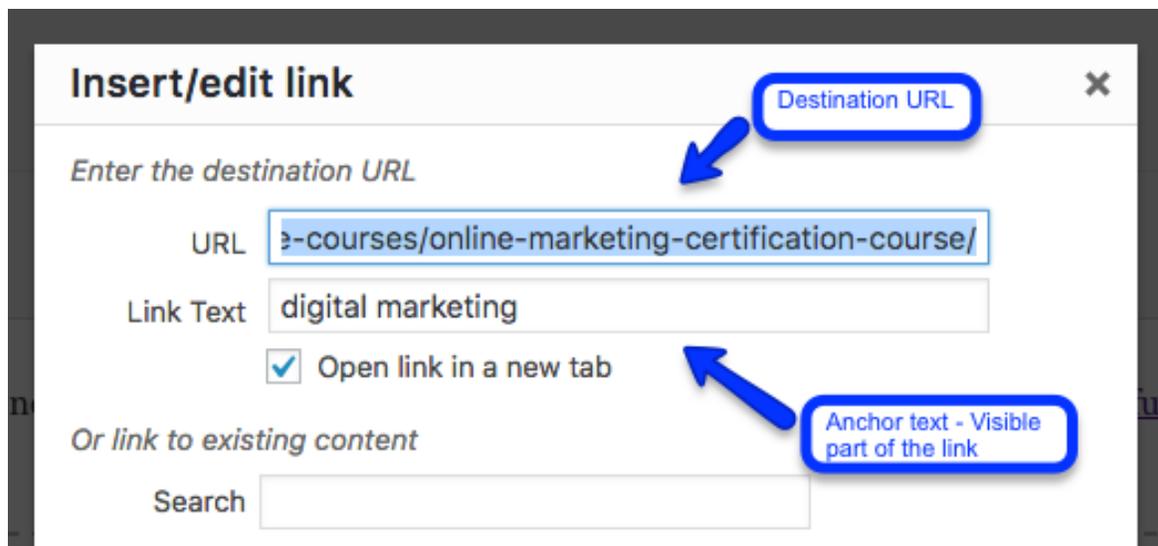
User-friendly

Unlike SEO content which is designed with search engines in mind and best practices used for such optimization, user-friendly content is all about the users. Outstanding content should fulfill

both of these purposes together. While still having in mind the optimization elements above, you also need to think about:

- Providing a summary of the topic at the beginning to get readers interested
- Online users often scan the text rather than reading it so make sure you use emphasis such as bullets, bold, headings, etc.
- Another way to emphasize things is to repeat or paraphrase something
- Shorter sentences and paragraphs are recommended to make comprehension easier
- Keep your thoughts organized, preferably share one idea or thought in one paragraph
- Do not go overboard with the keywords as the wording might seem artificial and unusual
- Use a personalized approach when you address your audience
- Do not use too many adjectives or dilly-dally for too long just to reach that recommended 1000+ word count. If there is not much to be said on the topic, try to expand the title or simply leave the post shorter

Mobile-friendly

By now, you probably are aware that a large percentage of online traffic originates from mobile devices. Some studies report that this percentage is already over 50%, and it is most certainly expected to grow. This is why thinking about mobile-friendliness when blogging is also a critical part of optimizing your blog.

Content structure

Starting off with content structure, think about this element when first creating the article. Due to a small screen on mobile devices, what may seem like a long(ish) paragraph on desktop, can look like a massive block of text on mobile devices. As the readers keep scrolling down, the block goes on and on.

To avoid this negative perception of your content, divide content into smaller chunks. Use short paragraphs. Sometimes, only a sentence can be a paragraph, and that is fine, as long as it makes sense to the context. You can also use bullets, lists, summaries, etc. Finally, think about this when creating headings and titles as well. Search engine result pages on mobile devices show even less text than on desktop, which means that a crucial part of your title might get cut off if the title is too long.

Understanding how mobile users read content will help you create articles that show a great level of engagement and actually get readers interested.

Responsive design

This is an essential characteristic of modern websites and blogs. The blog should be designed to be responsive which means that it will automatically adapt to the screen size. Most of the blog templates have responsive design nowadays, but it is worth checking this before choosing a template.

Page load time

Although page load time is one of the factors that affect positioning in SERP in general, when it comes to mobile experience, it is even more important. Readers expect pages to load fast, and they are unlikely to wait patiently as the page takes them through numerous redirects, or pulls the data from the slow server.

Use [Google's Mobile-friendly test](#) to check if your blog is optimized and if there are things you can do to improve the mobile user experience.
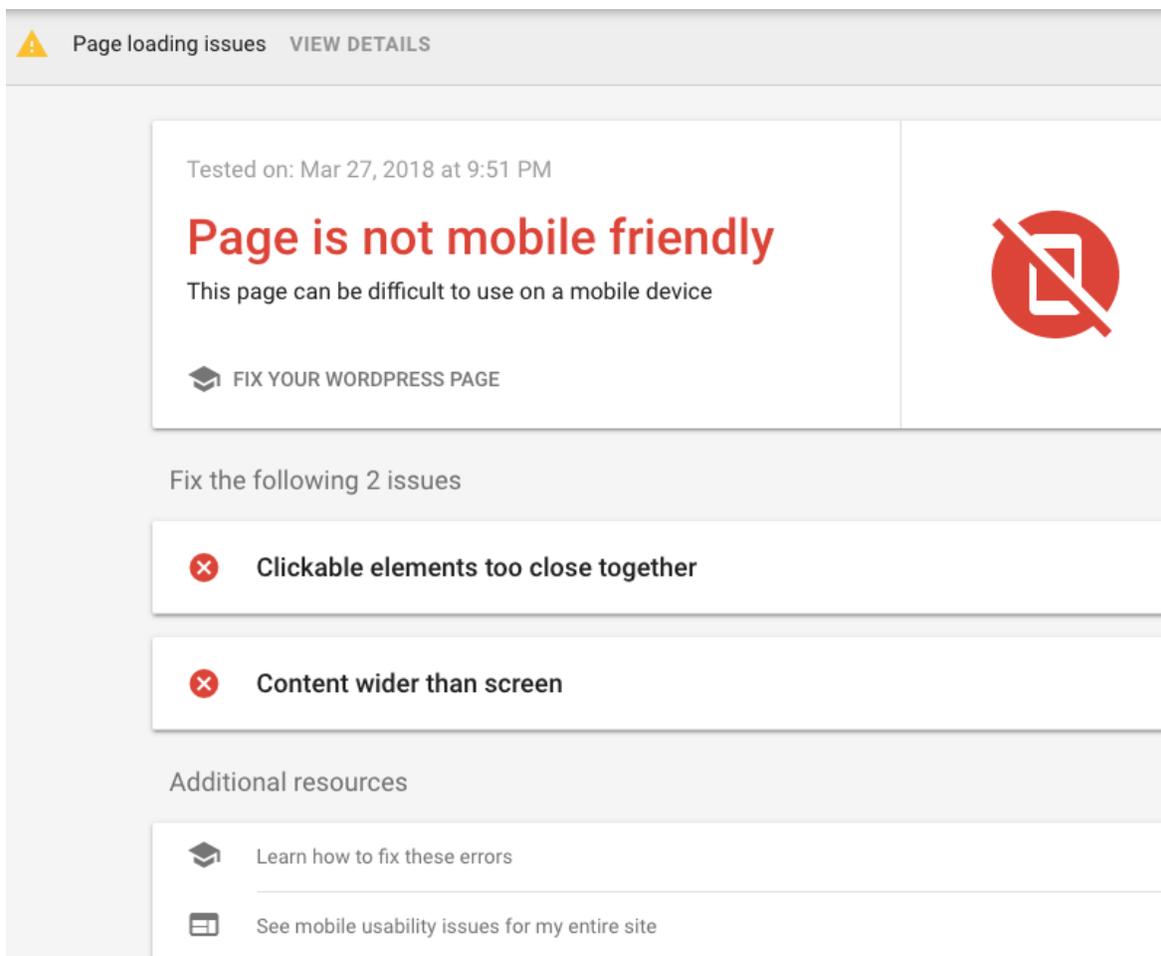
Images

Images can increase load time, so optimization of images is another very important aspect of mobile-friendliness. The general recommendation is to use tools and plugins to compress images. You should also make sure that the image displays properly within the article.

CTAs

CTAs are a very effective way of getting conversions, but with mobile users, you need to think carefully about placing the CTAs. Due to the small screen, the article will appear longer on a mobile device. So if the CTA is in the middle of the text or even in the end, it will get much less attention on mobile devices. Some users might not even see it because they quit the page before scrolling all the way down.

So, CTA should be somewhere near the beginning of the article. Or you could use a pop-up window.

Sidebar

Sidebars are great for desktop users. Most bloggers put a lot of important stuff in the sidebar, such as blogger's bio, related post widget, signup button, or even CTA. On mobile devices, sidebars are shown below the article. They do not serve the same purpose as on desktop view, where they are positioned at the top of the page and receive more attention. A large percentage of mobile users will not even see the sidebar on a mobile device. Instead, try placing the important stuff, such as CTA, in the article itself.

Blog optimization includes all of these three segments. You cannot optimize a blog for SEO only because you will fail at satisfying the users. And since the user experience has an indirect influence on your SEO, your efforts will turn out to be in vain. The same happens if you prioritize the users and neglect SEO. The readers might enjoy the content, but without SEO, search engines will probably have a hard time finding that content and showing it for relevant queries.

Therefore, think about all the three elements of blog optimization to create posts and pages that perform well and get amazing results.

9

Integrating Social Media

9. Integrating Social Media

Social networks are useful platforms to promote your blog. There are numerous ways to do so, starting from direct promotion which includes posting status updates and using sponsored ads, to indirect ways, such as building your influence.

With search engines, online users take action. They conduct a search query and then discover your content. Social networks are discoverable platforms. Social media users discover new content each day without specifically searching for it. They see their friend's post, they see content shared in groups, sponsored posts, etc. This allows them to connect with your social profiles.

https://www.pexels.com/photo/white-samsung-laptop-computer-showing-smartphones-163141/

Once they do so, it is your turn. You have the chance to connect with those followers using multiple social media strategies.

Sharing on social networks

Start by sharing your posts on social networks. Regardless the limitations of organic reach, social networks offer a platform to share your content and get visits from those who see the social media update. You can immediately start the interaction with the users, see the benefits your content brings and get feedback.

Think about these two sharing strategies:

Automated sharing

Use tools and blog plugins to share on social networks automatically. Some tools might automatically pull the title of the blog post as a status update, but some social media management platforms allow creating custom status update alongside each link to the blog article.

https://wordpress.org/plugins/social-media-auto-publish/

User sharing

Enable online visitors to share your content quickly and easily. You will need a plugin to install social sharing buttons which enable sharing.
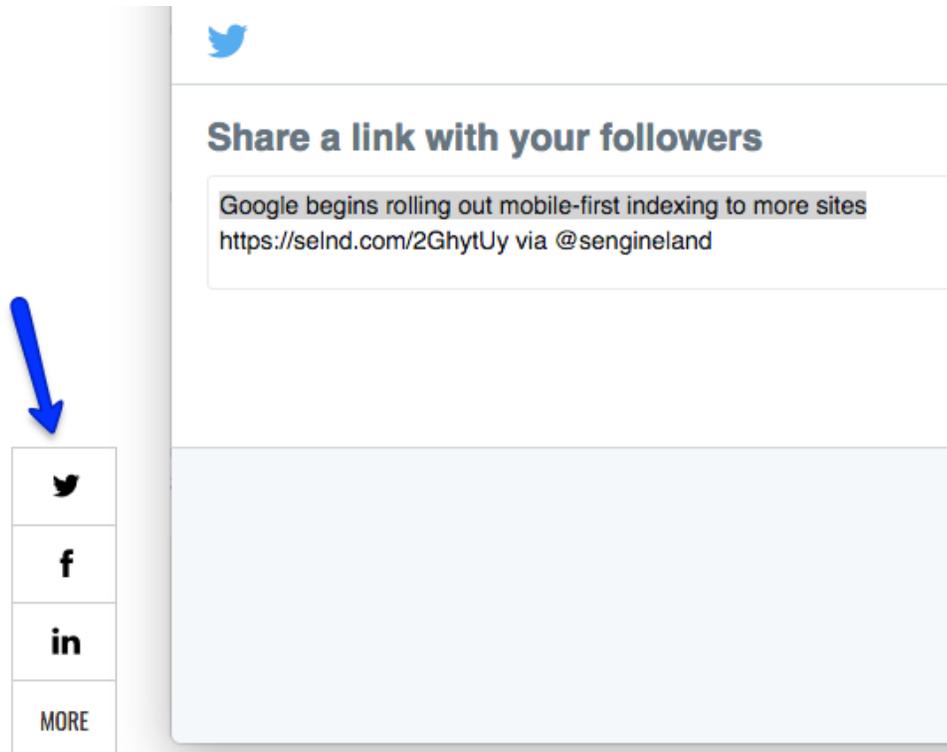
https://searchengineland.com/google-begins-rolling-out-mobile-first-index-to-more-sites-295095

Building influence through social networks

Another way to successfully use social media for your benefit is building influence. Influence has so much power on the internet nowadays and enables many opportunities to use this influence to improve your blog.

Start with a personalized approach. Make sure you always directly address your audience. You need to understand them, their habits, the way they communicate and why they find you relevant. This way you get to connect with them allowing you to use content that is tailored to them, that is personalized and creates trust. Be relatable and enable social media users to identify with you.

You will also need to gain credibility. This is done through consistent posting and professional approach to social networks. The content you share on social networks should be original, of high quality and worthy of attention.

Then think about engagement. As an influencer, you have the power to encourage people to communicate with you, to share their comments, questions, feedback, etc. Liking status updates is a passive way of engagement. Although lots of likes might mean that your blog post is great, you also need to think about active engagement, which is most commonly seen in the comments section.

Be approachable. You need to show that you really care about your followers. Once you see them starting communication in the comments, jump in. Try to deepen your relationship with online communication.

Promotion through social media

As you explore social networks and features each of them offers, you will find different ways to use them to promote your blog. Here are some commonly used tactics for social media promotion:

Organic reach

The first type of promotion includes organic reach. You share your blog content, expecting for it to reach social media users naturally. This kind of strategy used to bring some results, but today, the organic reach is limited by social network algorithms. This means that even if you share content with your social media followers, it will not reach all of them. Even so, you should be posting on social networks, but do not make unrealistic expectations and hope for outstanding results. Instead, combine organic reach with other promotion strategies.

Paid reach

As opposed to organic reach, there is paid reach. In this case, you pay a particular social network to show your post to a certain group of people. Rather than expecting the post to reach users on its own, you can boost the performance of this post through social media ads. Multiple targeting options that these ads include present a great way to increase the reach of your content and to target social media users through specific criteria, such as location, interests, age, etc.
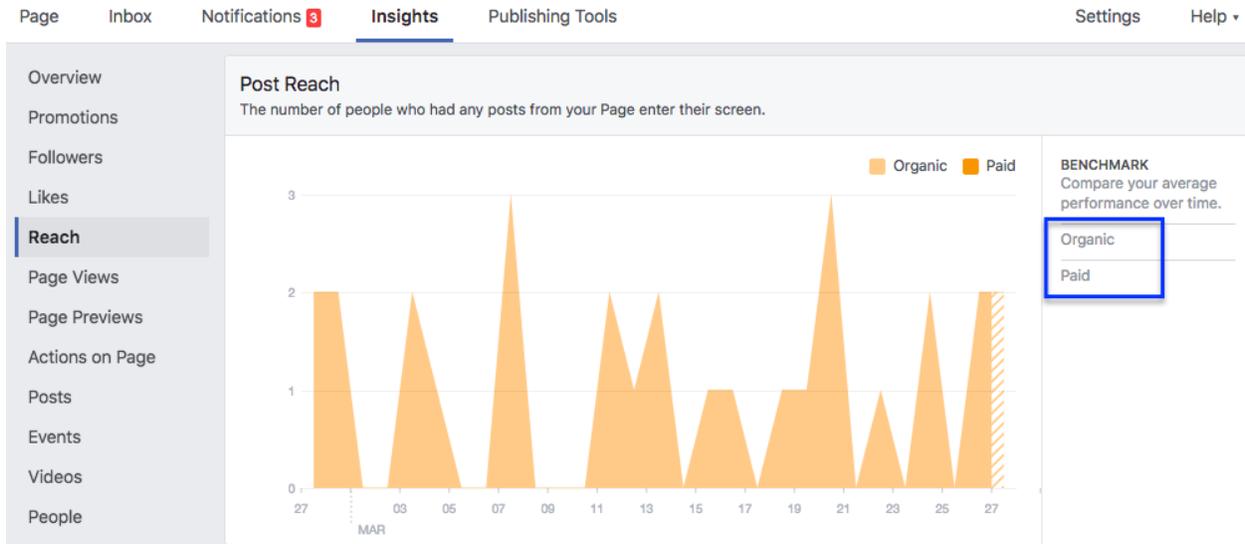
Social media promotions

Lots of brands organize social media promotions, such as competitions, giveaways, etc. This can be used in promoting your blog as well. You will need to plan this kind of campaign and determine what exactly you want to achieve with it. Define the possibilities this kind of promotion brings and use it to further promote your blog and build influence.

Collaboration with the influencers/brands

Another way you can get your content promoted on social networks is by collaborating with the influencers or brands. Just think about ideas that can make this collaboration work out well. For example, if you have a fashion blog, you could work with a clothing brand, and promote their new line in your blog post. They would then share your blog post, promoting it to their social followers, thus increasing the reach of your blog.

Another idea is to interview a famous blogger and publish an interview post on your blog. The blogger will certainly promote this blog post, again, increasing your visibility and helping you reach new social media users.

Try to think of social networks as a way to reach the users, but your ultimate goal should be to get those users to your blog. The performance obtained through social media can be limited due to poor organic reach or any practices social network impose or might start to.

Always have in mind that you do not have direct contact with these users. You usually cannot contact followers directly.

As much as social networks can help with reaching online audience, these are the platforms run independently. This means that they dictate the terms and they set the rules. Moreover, things can change. Facebook is a perfect example where they used to highlight importance of gaining Facebook page followers, only to cut down on organic reach soon after, in order to encourage more paid campaigns.

This is why you need to attract social media users to your blog, where you can encourage them to subscribe. Collecting email addresses allows you to organize email marketing campaign later on, as a direct way to communicate with those interested in your blog.

10

Getting Your Blog Indexed

10. Getting Your Blog Indexed

Once your blog is up and running, and once you hit that publish button on your first article, there might be days before you see any visits. This is perfectly normal, as the process of indexing the web pages needs time and does not happen overnight.

https://www.pexels.com/photo/grey-samsung-laptop-turned-on-beside-black-smartphone-163109/

First, you need to understand why this is happening.

The process of indexing web pages

Search engines have crawlers (also known as spiders) which are used to discover content. Search engine crawlers scout the web or updated content pages through links. When they discover a page, they access the page and sort it into a relevant database of content. Using blog optimization, you instruct the search engines what the page is about enabling them to put the content in the correct category.

Then, the online users conduct a search query using a search engine. In this case, the search engine reaches to its giant database and responds with the list of results. Only the pages that are indexed, i.e., stored in the database, can be shown in the results.

The crucial thing to understand here is that content is discovered through links. When you first set up your blog, you will probably not have any links pointing to your blog pages. This makes it difficult for the search engines to find you. Even if you do have a link or two, search engines will still need time to index your content. When they do, they will probably index a couple of pages first, rather than all of your content. Still, this is a good thing, because once one page on your blog gets indexed, the search engines will have it as a starting point from which they will crawl the rest of your blog. And this is yet another reason why interlinking is important. Search engines will use that one (or several) page that they have indexed to discover other pages on your blog.

In the meantime, while you wait for your blog to get indexed, there are a couple of things you can do to speed up the process and increase the chances of getting indexed.

Sitemap

Sitemap represents the collection of all the pages on your blog with links grouped into one file. It allows search engines to discover all of your blog content because it links to every blog page.

You will first need to create a sitemap using an online tools such as XML Sitemaps Generator or, if you are using WordPress, Google XML Sitemaps plugin.

https://www.xml-sitemaps.com/
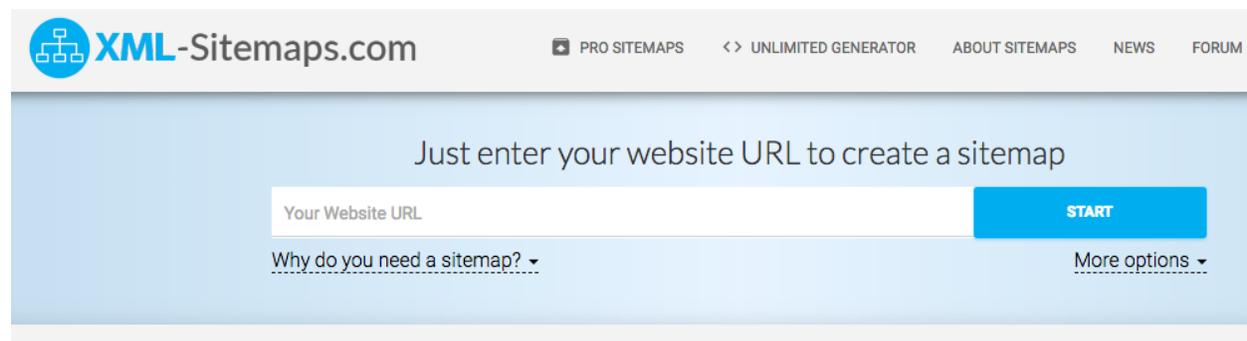
Using tools such as these, you get XML file which is accessible by major search engines including Google, Bing, and Yahoo.

Submit the sitemap to search engines

The next step is submitting your sitemap to search engines. For Google submission, you will need to:

- Login to your [Google Search Console](#) account

- Use the option *Add a property* to add your blog first

- Verify your blog to prove that you really own it

- Use the button *Add/test sitemap*

- Search Console requires a URL of the sitemap page

- Once you paste the URL you can click on *Submit*
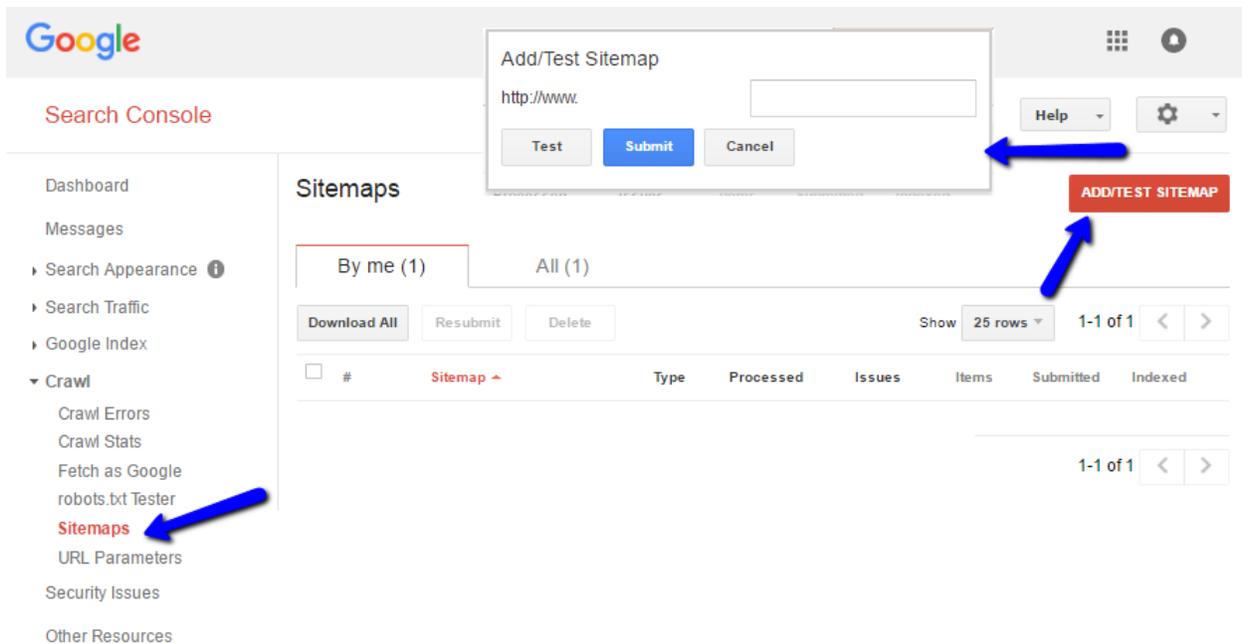
The process is similar for other search engines. For example, you will use [Bing Webmaster Tools](#) account to submit the sitemap to Bing search engine.

Submit to search engines

Even though the process of discovering and indexing web pages is automated, there still is an option to submit your blog to the search engines manually. There are no guarantees that this will speed up the process, nor do search engine promise that the submitted URL will appear in their database. However, it is an option worth exploring, if you want to do everything possible from your end to speed up the process or if you notice that the search engines might take too long to index your new pages.

Just follow the links and submit your blog URL:

- [Submit to Google](#)

- [Submit to Bing](#)

Get links

Since the new content is discovered through the links that already exist in the search engine's database, one way you can increase the chance of indexing your blog is to get links to your blog. This might be difficult when first starting out and you only have a handful of articles published. Even so, start thinking about link building from the start:

- Have great content which deserves links

- Conduct blogger outreach

- Work with influencers who will share your content

- Share the blog links on social media

- Interlinks are also helpful to increase the number of indexed pages

Make sure your content is optimized

The chapter on blog optimization features recommendations regarding optimizing your blog and making it accessible to the search engines. While you wait for your blog to be indexed, make sure you stick to those practices and use them to increase the visibility of your blog pages.

Publish regularly

Determine the pace of publishing you are comfortable with and start publishing new content regularly on your blog. The process of indexation is continuous, which means that search engines will get back to discover more pages. If with each new visit, they discover more, this will be a positive indicator to them that your blog is active.

In the end, it all comes down to your content and the quality you provide. Despite the fact that the process of indexing does need some time to pick up your recently published blog, your only guarantee for it to appear when the relevant search query is conducted is to have outstanding content, with quality that separates you from the rest.

11

Blog Statistics to Monitor

11. Blog Statistics to Monitor

Truth to be told, you cannot really say that you are running a successful blog without analytics data to back this claim. Essentially, blog statistics represent the reporting of your efforts, and reflect the performance of your content. They should provide information about how successful you are in reaching your audience and how likely you are to convert the visitors. Many more questions regarding your blog content and its performance can be answered with blog analytic data.

Blog metrics

Here are the most helpful metrics you should be monitoring to assess the performance of your blog:

Unique visits

This metric indicates the number of individuals who have seen your content. As you start blogging, you should see this metric going up. Monitoring unique visits also helps you determine how trends (such as season, particular events, etc.) affect your audience.

New Vs. returning visitors

Comparing these two metrics is very helpful for discovering your strengths (or weaknesses). For starters, if you notice that large percentage of your audience are new visitors, it means your blog promotion is effective. You are able to generate new traffic and this can help you with your blogging efforts.

While the percentage of new visitors might be significantly large, at the same time it means that the percentage of returning visitors is low. Although you are successful at blog promotion, it all means that your content lacks engagement and encouragement for the visitors to come back.

Always try to balance between these two, as both new and returning visitors should be a part of your blogging audience.

Pages per visit

Explore the flow of your visits using this metric. It should show you how engaging your content is, whether you have done interlinking or if your posts are readable. Users who visit a couple of pages per visit are interested in learning more about you or from you. Therefore, this metric shows that your content (or particular pages) are performing well.

Bounce rate

Another metric that can help you understand your content and how it affects your audience is bounce rate. It represents the number of people who had viewed only one page before they left the site. A page that shows high bounce rate must have an issue that is causing such behavior. You might be attracting the wrong audience, the page might not be optimized, or it might not respond to the related search query. Regardless the reason, it is an indicator of poor performance and demands your attention.

Have in mind that most blogs will see a certain percentage of bounce rate. Earlier studies suggested that it might even vary between 40 and 60%. It depends on a lot of factors, such as industry, or where the link to the post has been shared. What is important to understand is how bounce rate affects your own blog performance. Try to detect the pages with the highest bounce rate. Redesign those pages, add internal links, as well as a CTA. Then start comparing the results.

Then try to optimize even those pages that perform well, to try to reduce bounce rate even more. Through this process of testing, you will discover best ways to keep your audience engaged, which will result in lower bounce rate.

Average session duration

This metric can be an indicator of how successful you are at engaging your audience. Long average session duration is usually an indicator that the visitors are interested and they are genuinely reading your content. Compare this metric with the average page viewed per session and bounce rate to try to understand your visitors' behavior on site and how they interact with your content. Besides finding more about their behavior, you will also find out which content on your blog is most engaging.
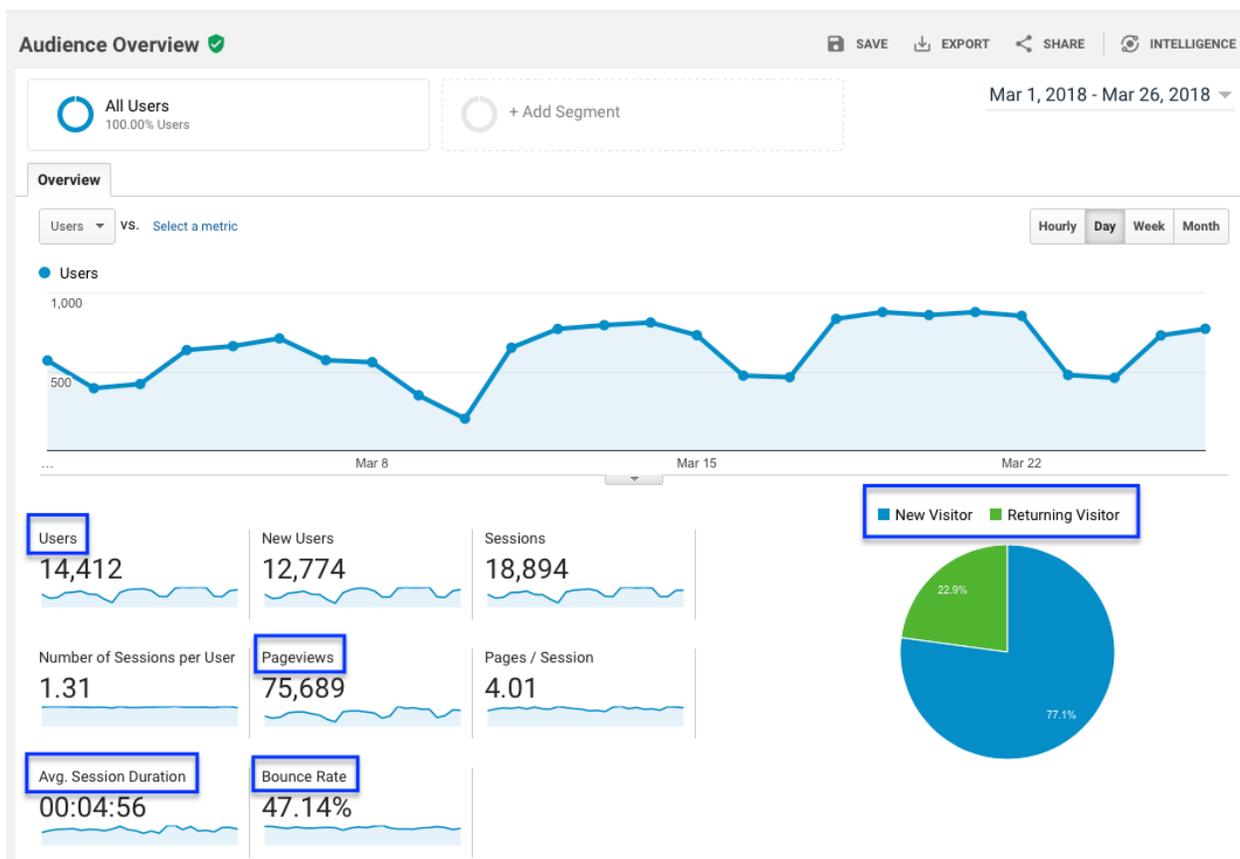
Popular content

Detecting popular posts or pages helps you discover your "secret" formula for success. Use your statistics to find the content that performs exceptionally well. When you pinpoint a particular post, examine it and try to determine some of the following details:

- Type of the post

- Topic of the post

- Whether the post has been shared by a popular blog/website/influencer

- Does the post have a CTA/internal links/external links

- Is it evergreen content

Try to find out if there is anything that makes this post different from the rest of the articles (such as being featured on the homepage, promoted in an ad on social networks, having more words than other posts, etc.)

The goal is to find out what is unique about that content, what makes it so popular among your audience. Any of the above can be the reason, depending on your blog.

Once you find out the reason for such popularity, try to apply this to another blog post as well. For example, you have noticed that a particular type of post is very popular, share a new post but keep the post type. You could even do A/B testing to find out which post version performs better.

Referral traffic

This metric helps you discover the blogs or websites that bring you traffic. Knowing this can be helpful if you want to establish a relationship with those linking to your blog, or discover new business opportunities. Referral traffic also shows which channels are the most valuable when it comes to generating traffic. For some, it might be organic reach, while some bloggers will see most benefits from social media traffic.
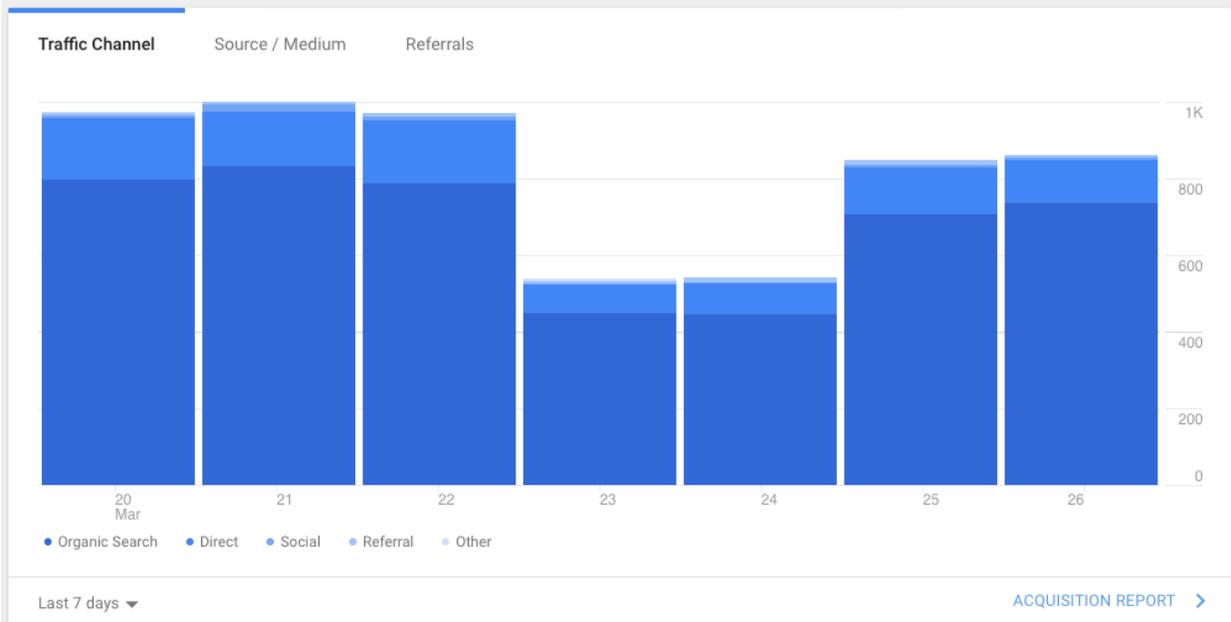
When you know where your backlinks originate from, this can introduce new ideas on how to promote your blog and leverage the power of these channels. For example, you might notice a lot of organic reach, but no social media traffic. This would be a good indicator of your SEO, but it would also mean that you will need to work on your social media marketing. Social networks could be an untapped resource of potential traffic. And you will not have the way to know all of this unless you dig into your blog analytics data.

New conversions

Even if your visits metric is through the roof, it would all be useless unless you are unable to generate new conversions. Conversion metric is an indicator of how good you are in converting people, i.e., encouraging them to complete the desired action. It is a metric that grows over time. You should be able to detect how different strategies, such as different content types, the frequency of publishing, and even page optimization affect the pace at which you are able to convert the visitors.

All bloggers should have an action defined as conversion, regardless if conversion for them is a signup, downloading a file, commenting on a blog post, etc. Converting visitors means that you are able to complete that goal you have set up and it means that your blogging shows good results.

Use data from the blog analytics to detect conversions and find out details such as:

- When the conversion happens (new or recurring visitor)

- On which page does the conversion happen (some posts might convert better)

- What kind of CTA gives the best results

- How other types of marketing (such as SEM) contribute to this metric

These are only some of the details you can obtain. To get the full picture regarding conversions and how you should improve your blog to increase conversion, dive deeper into analytics data, compare the metrics and find mutual connections that produce the best results.

Mobile visitors

When you first explore this metric, you will compare mobile vs. desktop visitors. Although this is worth knowing, focusing on the mobile audience is even more important. At this point, around half of your visitors will arrive from mobile devices. However, being able to understand those visitors will help you improve your blog.
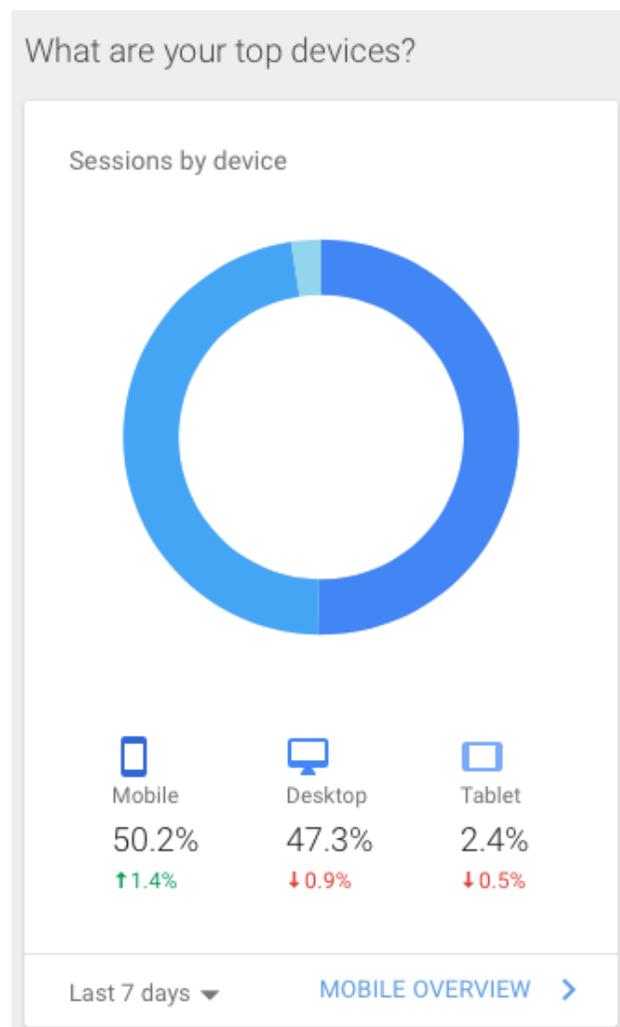
Find out all the relevant metrics for the mobile visitors, such as page views, session duration, bounce rate, etc. Knowing this should show you how mobile-friendly your blog is and whether your content is adapted for the mobile user experience. Make sure you do not miss on the significant percentage of traffic because of a couple of easy fixes in the process of mobile optimization.

Google Analytics for your blog

One of the most popular tools used for tracking blog analytics is Google Analytics. It is a free tool available to anyone who registers for a Google Account. Paid upgrades exist, but when your first start blogging, the free version of Google Analytics is enough to get the most important metrics related to your blog performance.

First, you will need to create an account. Go to Google Analytics and sign up with Google Account.
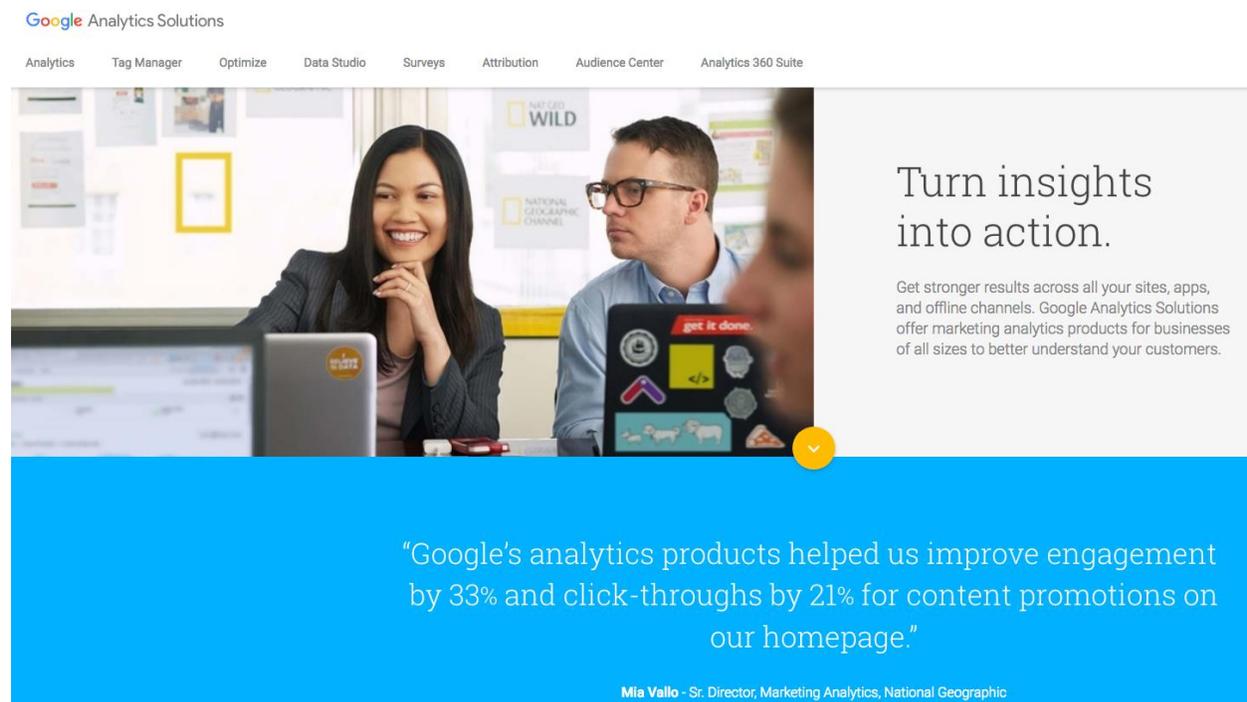
https://www.google.com/analytics/

You will then set up Google Analytics property. Here you will provide blog's URL, industry and time zone which will be used for reporting.

Then, you will get your unique Google Analytics tracking code. This code is used to link your blog to this Google Analytics account. Once these two are connected, the Analytics account will start fetching the data from your blog.

The next step is to save this tracking code and paste it into your blog. This can be done in multiple ways, depending on the type of platform you are using and how skillful you are with coding.

When it comes to WordPress platform, the most common way to integrate Google Analytics is to use a plugin. One of the most popular is Google Analytics for WordPress by MonsterInsights.

The good thing about using a plugin is that you do not need to be an expert to complete the integration. The process is quite simple and straightforward. Additionally, using a plugin ensures that you get reliable data, without the possibility for data to disappear due to coding errors or during regular template updates.

The next step for you is to explore Google Analytics in-depth and how the metrics above can help you improve or completely change your blogging strategy. Plenty of valuable blog data will be saved into the account for you to customize the views and use different reporting tools to focus only on those instances that matter to you.

12

Build Engagement on Your Blog

12. Build Engagement on Your Blog

In digital marketing, engagement is defined as the ability to encourage repeated interaction with your blog visitors. It is an investment into the relationship that is likely to result in conversion, regardless if that conversion is a sale, sign up, etc. The emphasis is on the creation of the relationship between the blogger and the audience through the series of activities that will require participating from both.

Many bloggers successfully reach readers, their content is consumed on a daily basis, but what lots of them fail to do is to engage those visitors. Encouraging online users is not easy. People are used to being passive when they explore online content. Even if they love the content they read, even if they find it useful, hardly anyone will provide feedback or engage in any way with the blogger.

https://www.pexels.com/photo/close-up-photography-of-yellow-green-red-and-brown-plastic-cones-on-white-lined-surface-163064/

Several strategies to redefine your approach and refocus your writing could help with building engagement on your blog.

Use conversational voice

When you create content for your blog, try to use this down-to-earth approach and stick to the language that your target audience will understand and respond well to. You do not want complicated and long sentences or to use a bunch of terms hardly anyone will be familiar with. At the same time, you do not want to be too colloquial and use the sense of humor that your visitors might misunderstand or even not comprehend at all. It is best to find your voice somewhere in the middle.

This kind of an approach helps your audience to understand your content better. The article will be readable, and it will not be difficult to follow the topic. It will be practical, and that is what most online users are looking for.

Not only is it more relatable, but the conversational language is also more likely to encourage people to interact. They will feel more comfortable sharing their voice in this case.

Here are a couple of practical tips on how to make your writing more conversational:

Write in a conversational style

You are not trying to impress your editor with outstanding sentence structure and impressive vocabulary. You want to reach ordinary people who often read the blogs just to pass the time. This is why conversational voice resonates better.

Avoid long sentences

If the readers are distracted or not fully focused on reading (for example, they might be reading while waiting for the bus), they might find it difficult to follow the article. Therefore, use shorter sentences and also short paragraphs.

Avoid too many technical terms

If you need to use them, explain them in plain language so that the readers can easily understand. You do not want to make readers look up the word themselves in the dictionary.

Phrasal verbs and idioms

These are typically used in colloquial language. If possible, use them in your articles from time to time. However, make sure your readers are aware of the meaning (for example, if they are not native speakers, they might not understand an idiom that is not commonly used).

Avoid passive voice

Passive voice puts the focus on the action, rather than on the person doing it. While this is great construction to use occasionally to emphasize the action, at times, it may seem a bit impersonal. If appropriate, always go for an active sentence instead.

Invite people to interact

This one seems like an obvious suggestion, but many bloggers seem to neglect this strategy to increase engagement. There are a couple of ways you can invite the readers to participate:

- Ask a question

- Ask for their opinion

- Ask them to leave the comment

- Set up a challenge and invite them to participate

- Set up a poll

Bloggers often leave the CTA at the end of the article. It is an effective way to conclude the topic and invite people to participate, by completing any action you mention in this section, such as leaving their comment, answering the question, etc. This represents a good way to sum everything up and pass on the mic to the readers.

However, a significant percentage of the readers is lost before they read the end of the page, especially on mobile devices. The page might be taking too much to load, there might be pop-ups that annoy the reader, or the reader simply has to leave before having the time to read the full article.

This is why it is helpful to invite the people early on. Some might even start the article with questions for the readers. Some might feature a button for the challenge after the first paragraph. It depends a lot on the type of content you are writing and the type of activity you want to encourage. And, you do not have to do this with absolutely every article. However, it is a strategy worth testing, as it is believed that it can have a positive influence on the engagement of the visitors.

Dedicated communities

The power of community is impressive. Although it is difficult to create community, once you do, it will be a constant source of engagement. It will help you grow your blog, influence others and

turn your blog into a place for like-minded people. It will increase trust and hugely boost your reputation in the online world.

Some of the popular ways of using this strategy for increasing blog engagement include:

Free communities

With this approach, you offer free access to everyone who is interested in becoming a member. Usually, communities require some sort of registration to create an account. This enables the blogger to manage the community and take care of comment moderation more successfully.

The usual form of communities on your blog are forums that feature interaction threads where online users can post comments. A popular alternative for free communities is a community inside a Facebook group. Unlike Facebook pages, groups usually have better organic reach. Furthermore, they are more user-friendly than forum pages and threads.

With free communities, you try to build the relationship with all of your readers (without any segmentation). This directly increases your influence and indirectly promotes your blog and yourself as a blog owner.

Exclusive communities

Exclusive communities are for a specific group of your blog readers. You do not want to offer this access to everyone, but instead, you will segment the online users based on certain criteria.

For example, if you also have an online course, you could create an exclusive community for those who signed up for your course. Or, you can share the link to the group with your subscribers once they sign up for your newsletter.

The goal is to focus on a specific group. When they have completed a certain action (such as joining your course or signing up for the newsletter), they have already expressed interest in connecting with you. Offering something exclusive to them, such as access to the community, strengthens this bond and helps you engage these visitors inside the community.

Paid communities

Although less common than the first two, this approach can also be one of the strategies of using communities to promote your blog. Having a paid community means that the blog visitors will need to make payment to join. In return, they get access to the community.

However, this membership usually comes with some other perks, such as premium content, early access, etc. Offering some perks is a recommended step because it brings extra value. Since they are paying for the access, this value is another encouragement for them to consider joining.

Organize an activity

Try to engage your visitors with an activity that will bring them back to your blog. This way, you increase the number of recurring visitors, and you also help visitors to get to know you better, which improves your relationship with them.

Activities you could organize include:

Webinar

Promote this webinar on your blog and choose to focus on the topic which is very interesting for your blog readers.

Challenge

Invite people to join your challenge and participate in an activity. A popular form of challenges includes monthly challenges, where you encourage readers to complete a certain action. Of course, this activity should aim to establish your relationship with the readers and gain their trust. For example, if you are a fitness trainer, create a program that would give your blog readers new challenge exercises each day for a month.

Project

Your blog readers can join in on a project you are working on. It can be a sort of collaboration, a case study, research, etc.

Competition

Set up a challenge for your blog readers and offer a prize for the winner. Make sure you create rules for participating and explain the winner selection process. Promote this competition on your blog, in your newsletter, and on social media to increase its reach and the number of participants.

Readers become your focus

The idea with increasing engagement is to invite your readers to respond and to take part in an activity. To make this happen, you need to focus on the readers.

Although blog performance and SEO, are certainly aspects you should always have in mind, try to put the readers in the spotlight when creating a strategy to increase engagement. The readers are the ones you want to reach, so your strategy needs to be designed in a way to strengthen the bond between you two and help you increase your influence.

Here are some ways to achieve this:

Personalization

Address your readers directly (using their first name in email campaigns). Some bloggers also like to have a special name for their blog followers (sometimes a made-up word derived from the blog name). The goal is to leave an impression of a regular person being behind your blog, instead of a "ghost".

Reader-friendly content

Optimize and format your articles so that they are reader-friendly. The readers should be able to easily follow the topic, as well as to skim through the text if they prefer consuming it in such a way.

Valuable content

Enable readers to find the information or help they need. Your blog content should provide content of high quality related to your niche. It should also provide enough information so that readers will not have to look up more details somewhere else.

Communication with your readers

When you see the readers initiate the connection with you (on your blog, on social media, etc.), it is your time to take part. Show them that you are really there and that you appreciate them taking the time to answer a question, participate in your competition, etc.

Related content

This is a very commonly used method of engaging the blog readers. The goal is to provide more useful content for them to browse before they leave your blog. Each blog article should be optimized in such a way that provides links to more content they might find relevant.

Firstly, there is a link to the homepage, which is a great starting point for new readers. Other related content could be:

Related articles

Related articles are those that cover similar or related topic on your blog. Usually, you use tags and categories to sort articles and for the widget to make logical connections when showing related articles. The related articles are often featured below the text. They can also be in the sidebar.

https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/seo-analysis-tools
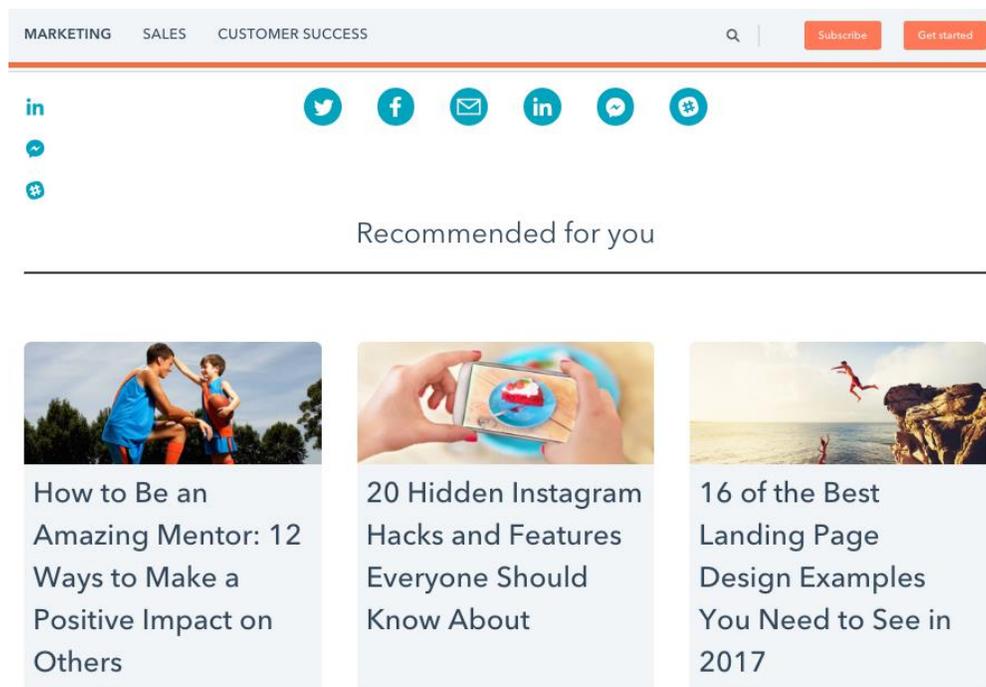
Internal links

When you mention a topic or a term that you have already covered in a separate article, use internal links to link to the relevant content. Although it is best to link to your own content, you can also include external links if they provide value to your readers.

CTA

Call to action is a button or a link that invites online visitors to take action. Depending on the strategies you use to increase engagement, this CTA can link to your signup page, to the competition you are organizing, to your community, etc. This is related content and provides more value to the readers encouraging them to participate.

MARKETING   SALES   CUSTOMER SUCCESS   🔍 |

There's nothing quite like a sudden Google algorithm update to leave marketers feeling equal parts confused and concerned. It seems like they wait for you to get all of your ducks in a row and then unleash an update that makes your efforts instantly obsolete.

Sure, they're pretty open about that fact that they're doing this for everyone's own good -- each algorithm tweak brings us one step closer to more relevant search results, after all. However, there is still some secrecy behind *exactly* how Google evaluates a website and ultimately determines which sites to show for which search queries.

That said, there are a number of tools out there -- some free, some paid -- that help you to look at your own site the way that Google sees it.

CTA

📈 Free Interactive Lesson: How to Find the SEO Strategy that Fits Your Business

Internal link

These tools are critical to your organic search strategy because they allow you to focus on the elements of your site that Google deems important. In this post, we'll walk through 10 such tools that all help you run a site analysis like a marketer ... *and* a Google bot!

https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/seo-analysis-tools

Always have in mind that activities and strategies you use on your blog should be designed to exploit its full potential. There is no need to use all of these approaches. Nor is there a need to stop here. You should go ahead and explore more options how you can increase engagement. Also, monitor your blog performance to find out which method of building engagement is best for your blog visitors. The idea is to create a completely custom strategy, one that shows best results and, together with your blogging strategy, contributes to achieving your goals.

13

Ways to Promote Your Blog

13. Ways to Promote Your Blog

Having your blog up and running and publishing content regularly is only the beginning. The next part of your work as a blogger will be to promote your blog to the online users. There are numerous ways for blog promotion, and knowing about them will help you create your unique promotion strategy. You will get to choose the promotions that are suitable for your blog, and that will produce best results.

https://www.pexels.com/photo/brown-framed-eyeglasses-905163/

Have extraordinary content

In blogging, it is all about your content. Content is the assets you present to your audience. It is the magnet that attracts recurring visitors. It is the reason they subscribe. Finally, it is the tool you use to build your reputation and influence.

If you manage to create extraordinary content that helps you differentiate from the rest, content that makes a difference, solves a problem and successfully respond to the user query, this effort will certainly be recognized by your audience.

Some common characteristics of extraordinary content include the following features.

Uniqueness

Your content needs to be one of a kind. Even if the topic you write about has been covered so many times, you are the only one with your unique perspective. Express your opinion and show your original view that will help you create unique content. Forget about what other have to say about the topic. Your opinion is the one that matters when creating original content for your blog.

Consistency

When talking about consistency, most bloggers will think about being consistent in publishing regularly. This is one of the common obstacles bloggers face, and yet it is a crucial aspect for keeping your blog fresh and up-to-date.

As much as this is important, consistency in your writing is even more crucial to your blog success. Define your writing style and views and transfer those into blog content. You should not say one day one thing, and then after a month or so claim the opposite. This could harm your reputation and make people doubt your opinions. Instead, form your own opinions and be consistent when expressing them.

Completeness

Show that you are an expert on the topic. Provide a thorough analysis of the topic, with all the details one might find relevant. This kind of content is known to perform exceptionally well. Online users find it useful, practical and they are more likely to share it.

Be an active member of communities

Blogging has always had that social aspect, so being an active member of the blogosphere is a great strategy to promote your blog. Join blogging communities, collaborate with other bloggers, participate in the discussions on social media and try to create a unique profile for yourself in doing so. This way, you increase your exposure as the blog author. Since you are most likely to have your blog homepage link featured alongside your profile, you indirectly increase the number of people who get to discover your blog.

Promote on social media

This is the number one strategy among bloggers. Almost every blogger uses at least this kind of promotion to reach new users and to share the latest content. To make sure social media promotion works for you, follow these steps:

Choose the social networks

There are so many social networks out there. You cannot and should not be active on all of them. Remember that social networks enable you to promote your content and reach online users who are interested in your brand. Therefore, choose the networks where you are most likely to achieve these goals.

Most bloggers start with [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#). The main reason for this is the fact that these are the most popular social networks at this moment with the highest number of users. However, as you start, you might want to explore other networks as well, such as [Pinterest](#), [Google+](#), [Snapchat](#), [YouTube](#), [Reddit](#), [Flickr](#), etc.

Regardless which networks you choose, try to limit your focus on a couple of them. After all, you do not want to spend all day managing social networks. Use statistics and social network insights (if available) to only focus on those that help you promote your blog.

Create recognizable presence

When you choose the social networks where you want to participate, you should try to establish a recognizable presence.

- Have a profile and cover images that represent your blog
- Choose a username that matches your blog name
- Include a link to your blog homepage
- Provide a brief description, your story, bio, mission, etc.
- Enable users to contact you (if social network supports this feature)

Ultimately, make sure each social profile represents your blog and invites people to find out more about you and what you have to offer.

Share content on social networks

The next step is sharing on social networks. Sharing your content is your top priority. You can share posts immediately, or you can set them to be published using scheduling options. You can

do this manually, or you can use social media management tools to automate posting or post on several social networks simultaneously.

To diversify content, you should occasionally share content created by others. This can be a photo taken by a professional photographer. It can be an article that you find to be incredibly helpful to your audience. It can be a motivational video, a podcast, etc. Do not be afraid to share other people's work. Not only will you maintain the habit of sharing quality content with your followers, but people whose work you have shared might share something of yours or reach out with potential collaboration in mind.

Interact with your followers

Finally, make sure you interact with your followers to establish a relationship with them. The primary interaction you should focus on is on your blog and through email marketing, but interaction on social media can also be helpful. Firstly, people find this way of communicating quite convenient and comfortable. Also, most of this communication will be public, so others can see it and be encouraged to join or to find out more about your blog.

Paid promotion

When you first start blogging, organic reach might grow at a pretty slow pace. The visits are coming, but not as quickly as you were hoping. If you want to speed things up and you have the budget, try using paid promotions to promote your blog:

Search engine ads

Organizing a search engine marketing campaign offers an opportunity to target search engine users. Your ads will be a part of the paid reach, and they will be shown above or next to organic reach. The ads may also appear on the blogs and websites of Google's partners that participate in Google AdSense program.

Social media ads

Promoted posts on social networks come with a larger reach than organic post shared on your social media profile. Not only does social media promotion increase the reach of your post, but it also helps you target the users who will see your content, including the users who are not necessarily your followers.

Paid collaborations

With this kind of promotion, you pay to another company or blog owner to advertise your blog. They can share your blog article in their newsletter, they can publish your blog banner on their website, etc.

If you decide to use any of these paid promotion tactics, try to plan each campaign in details. You want to make sure that you set up clear goals and that you are managing to achieve them.

Email marketing

To be able to use email marketing for the promotion of your blog, you will need to start building a mailing list. Some bloggers make a mistake of waiting until they have sufficient content or visitors to start creating a mailing list. This is a very common mistake, one which you should avoid.

Start creating your mailing list from the first day your blog goes live. Have a subscribe button that enables visitors to sign up for the newsletter. Offer downloadable materials and other perks to encourage people to leave their email address.

Once you begin collecting email addresses, start sending out newsletter and email marketing campaigns. Use emails as a way to communicate with your subscribers, to offer them exclusive content, content recommendations, share your personal experience they could find helpful. You should also use this communication to find out more about them. This way you build relationship and trust, which will indirectly promote your blog and content you create.

Guest blogging

The process of guest blogging includes creating content to be published on someone else's blog. It works two ways. You can create content for another blog in which case you are guest blogging. Another blogger or influencer can write content for your blog, so you will be accepting a guest blog post.

The benefit of such promotion is that you get a different audience to see your blog in both situations. When you are a guest blogger, your article will reach new readers who might decide to click on the link to your blog (which you will include in the article). If you publish a guest blog article, the guest blogger will share this article with the followers on social networks or with the subscribers. Again, these might be entirely new online users increasing the exposure of your blog.

To make sure this kind of promotion is something your blog will benefit from:

- Set up goals you want to achieve with this promotion strategy (increase traffic, get new subscribers, etc.)

- Determine if the audience that will see your guest blog is really relevant to you

- Create content that will be engaging and will encourage new readers to visit your blog

Also, being a guest blogger is good for your link profile. When you are guest blogging, the link to your blog will be included in the article or author's profile.

Blogger outreach

Another strategy that helps with blog promotion, as well as link building is blogger outreach. With this strategy, you reach out to bloggers with a specific collaboration in mind. The ideas for the collaboration include:

- Asking them to share your article/guide/infographic

- Asking for an opinion or recommendation about your blog/article, etc.

- Proposing a guest blogging collaboration

- Proposing a collaboration idea such as mutual workshop, webinar, etc.

- Asking to participate in a round-up/survey, etc.

- Showing interest to interview the blogger

The process of blogger outreach includes several stages, which start with identifying the contacts you would want to work with and ends with a response to your proposal, which can be positive or negative. If the answer is positive, you can create a plan to implement the proposed activity which will mutually promote your blogs to the audience of the other.

Working with influencers

Influencers are people who enjoy significant influence in the online world. They are bloggers, vloggers, business owners, experts, entrepreneurs, etc. The influence they have and their reputation enable them to affect people's decisions, buying habits, opinions, etc. This is why online influence is such an incredible asset to have.

While establishing your reputation as a blogger, one of your goals could be to become an influencer yourself. Although this goal requires time to achieve, it is a valid strategy to grow and improve your blog.

Try to find an influencer who would be interested in working with you. The joint project could be a collaboration video, a webinar, or any other project that would be an interesting content for your audience. The benefit of this collaboration could be mutual promotion, content that you would not be able to complete without helping each other, etc.

When you first start your blog, not all of these options will be available. For example, email marketing will not get you incredible results, because you are only starting out with creating your mailing list. Time is needed to encourage contacts to subscribe. Only later will you be able to use this to establish the relationship and run high-performing campaigns.

However, knowing about all of these ways to promote your blog from the beginning is very important. You get the opportunity to plan long-term promotion and implement blogging strategy that will enable you to achieve your goals.

14

Making Money Through Your Blog

14. Making Money Through Your Blog

Different monetization tactics are available to bloggers nowadays. In fact, so many opportunities for blog monetization are one of the main reasons why many people start blogging in the first place.

When you first start your blog, explore these options and choose those that can be implemented in your blogging with most success.

https://www.pexels.com/photo/white-apple-keyboard-near-white-cup-917463/
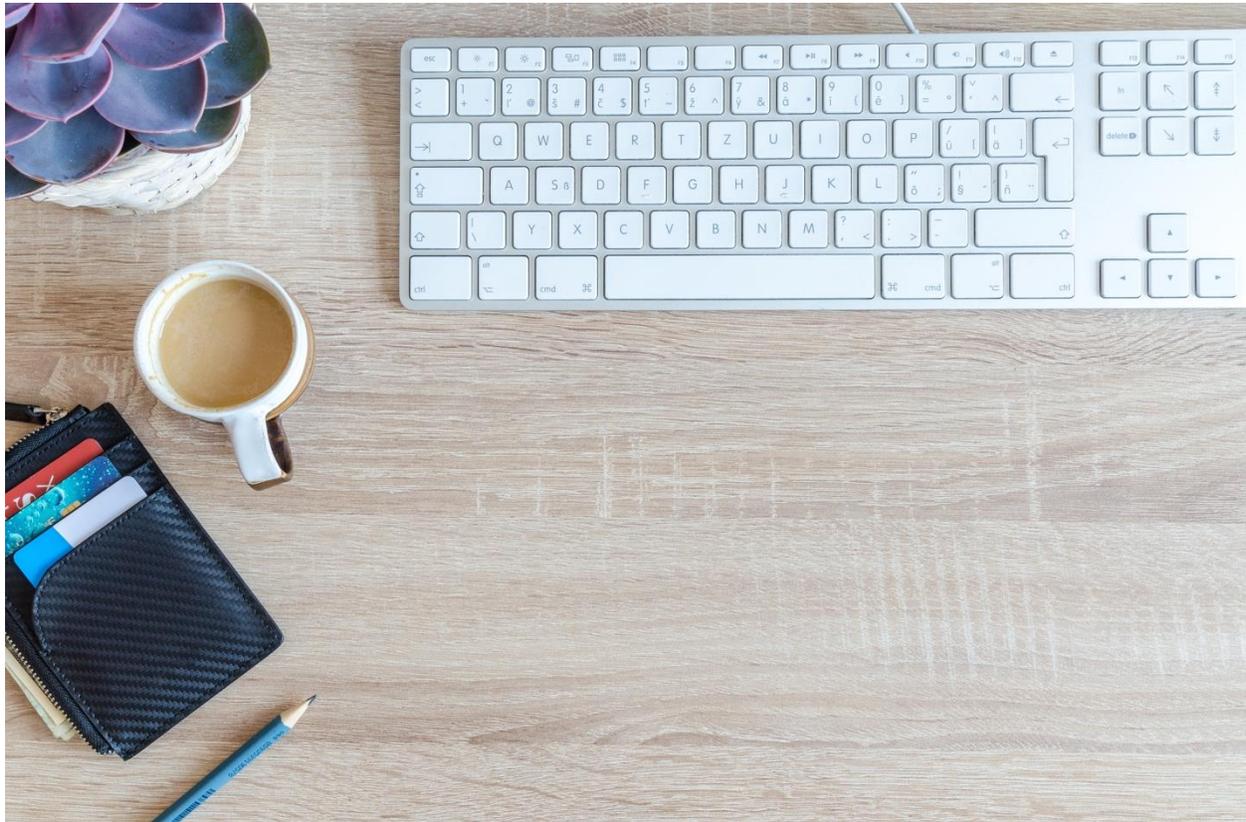
Affiliate marketing

This performance-based form of online marketing involves promotion of affiliate links on your blog. You get the links and other creative materials from the merchants once you join an affiliate program. As a blogger, you become a publisher, and your goal is to advertise these links on your blog. In return, you get a percentage of the sale. For you to be eligible for this commission, the sale must be completed by the customer who arrived at merchant's website through your link. All affiliate links have tracking codes, enabling merchants to contribute specific bloggers with their commission.

Have in mind that most hosted platforms, such as WordPress.com, prohibit the promotion of affiliate links. If this is a strategy you contemplate using in the future, you should start your blog on a self-hosted platform.

AdSense

If you want to monetize your blog through dynamic banner ads posted on your blog, then this option is one of the ways to go. Provided by Google, with ads displayed to both desktop and mobile users, AdSense is a monetization tactic that does not require much involvement from your end. All you need to do is to register your account, place banner ads, and reach as many online users as you can. You earn money when someone sees or clicks on the ad. As a form of passive income, this strategy is the one that can keep running without the need to monitor or manage anything.

The major drawback of this approach is the fact that it is not a much profitable strategy. Even blogs with lots of monthly traffic report a pretty modest income through this type of profit-making. For someone who is only starting out, with limited traffic, it might be months before you see any income from ads posted through AdSense program.

Banners

It is a similar strategy like the previous one, as you will need to create a space on your blog for ads to be displayed. In this case, you collaborate with those interested in advertising on your blog in exchange for payment. Depending on your agreement, you can set up the price and the time interval for payments.

In the beginning, you might find it difficult to reach those interested in paying for an advertisement on your blog, as you do not have much traffic or reputation. As your blog grows, this might be a profitable strategy for you.

Still, have in mind that this is a static ad, which will always be the same and shown to the users every time they visit your blog. The banner can be featured on the homepage only, but to maximize its exposure, most bloggers include it on all pages. Finally, make sure that the banner is not too much of a distraction for the blog readers (this mainly refers to the choice of size and colors of banner design).

Sponsored content

Instead of placing a banner for all the visitors, you can advertise something in a post which is specifically designed for this purpose. You can be the content creator, but you can also receive the blog post content along with the payment for this post to be published on your blog. Again,

excellent reputation and lots of traffic increase the success of monetizing your blog through this form of promotion.

Apart from an article, other content can also be advertised on your blog, such as an event, a conference, etc. You could also extend this sponsorship to your newsletter or blogging community.

Starting a business

Lots of examples out there show the massive success of turning a blog into a business. Regardless if this is a strategy they have planned all along, or it is an unexpected opportunity for blog owners, many bloggers have managed to turn blogging into successful online careers and businesses.

Here are some examples of how you can turn your blog into a business:

- Open an online store
- Write and publish a book (ebook or audiobook)
- Create an online course
- Create a product
- Offer a service

Promoting a business

This is another strategy to earn money through blogging. Focus on one or several businesses you want to work with and establish a collaboration that works for both of you. The business you are going to promote might offer you their service or product in exchange for a promotion, or you can receive a fixed payment. You can promote a business using many different methods such as banners, sponsored post, text links, etc. You can even receive a special affiliate link to promote the business in question.

Products and services

Advertising different products and services is a strategy where you can promote other businesses (their products and services), as well as your products or services. Regarding product promotion, these can be digital and physical products. With such a promotion, there are several approaches bloggers can take:

- Promote in a single post
- Product mentions (with text/image link)
- Banners

- Affiliate links
- Newsletter links promotion

What to think about when choosing monetization method?

Numerous monetization tactics exist, and you will probably use at least several of them. Moreover, it is recommended that you do, to maximize the income generated through your blog. Still, there are some things to have in mind before you start making money through your blog:

Long-term goals

Consider your long-term blogging goals before you decide upon any collaboration and promotion with other businesses. Although a payment now might be a motive to close the deal, think about how this will reflect upon your plans. You do not want to start working on a promotion that might prevent you from growing your blog or achieving your blogging goals.

For example, if you plan on creating a physical product in the future, you do not want to start advertising your future competitors.

Passive income myth

This myth is something bloggers often have to deal with. In fact, some people start blogging hoping to eventually "earn without doing anything". As much as alluring this might seem, there is no such a thing for bloggers.

If you want to keep your blog in business and keep earning from the blog, you will need to continually be active online. You cannot create a bunch of content and then simply disappear, expecting this content to eternally bring you income.

Only an active blog can keep growing and keep brining income through blogging. Being active enables you to manage and monitor your promotional activities and to explore new ways to promote your content. As you increase the reach of your content, this will increase the efficiency of the strategies used for blog monetization.

Target group

It is helpful to consider your audience when choosing blog monetization methods. If you know that they are unlikely to buy a certain product, there is no point in choosing to feature affiliate links to this product. You should always have in mind that for achieving your monetization goals, you need to encourage your audience to buy the product you are promoting. If the product is not relevant to them, it is out of their price range, or there is no delivery option for their country, this kind of monetization strategy will give no results at all.

Instead, think about your target group and how they would respond to the product you are promoting. Choose the products they will find relevant. The same principle is applied when promoting services, other businesses, etc. Relevancy in regard to your target audience should be a key factor in determining the potential of a monetization opportunity.

Type of content

The type of content also has influence on the monetization method you are going to use. For example, if you mainly use video format, it is more likely to promote a specific product, than to use blog banners. On the other hand, if you want to create an article list, rather than promoting a single product, you could use affiliate marketing. In this case, you would be able to feature multiple product links within a single article.

You should choose the type of monetization strategy that has most chances in succeeding as a part of your blog and content you create on this blog.

The bottom line is that making money through blogging is a possibility that is always out there. How likely you are going to take advantage of this possibility depends on your blogging strategy and how successful you are at:

- Increasing exposure of your blog

- Creating extraordinary content that brings organic reach, new subscribers, links, shares and online reputation

- Building your online influence

Achieving these as your goals will definitely help with unlocking multiple blog monetization opportunities.

15

How to Start a Blog

Glossary

15. How to Start a Blog Glossary

59. A/B testing – A/B testing (also called split testing) is the process of comparing two versions of a web page or an email. The goal is to determine which version performs better and which elements contribute to a better performance.

60. Accelerated mobile pages (AMP) – Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP) is a project designed to promote the improvement of the internet by creating fast, mobile-friendly pages in order to increase the performance and engagement of those pages.

61. Affiliate link – An affiliate link is a URL that contains affiliate's ID or username. This enables tracking the traffic obtained through these links to determine from which web page the traffic originated.

62. Affiliate program – Affiliate program is a program where merchants offer terms and conditions regarding promotion of their products. Those who want to join such a program (also known as affiliates) get the information about the program before they decide whether to join or not.

63. Automated posting – This is the process of automatically posting something through software which uses certain criteria and triggers for posting. For example, WordPress has a feature that enables you to automatically post on social media once you publish a post on your blog.

64. Backlink – A backlink is an incoming link that links to another website or blog page.

65. Blogger outreach – Blogger outreach is a type of online marketing campaign where you seek opportunities to gain exposure for your blog through some sort of collaboration, such as mutual promotion, shared project, etc.

66. Broken link – A broken link (also called a dead link) is a link that does not work. It shows an error page because the page that the link is pointing to no longer exists. Broken links have a negative influence on SEO and user experience.

67. Content marketing – Content marketing is a type of online marketing focused on creating content in various formats and sharing it using multiple content distribution channels. The goal of content marketing is to increase interest in the brand, which indirectly increases conversions.

68. Copyright infringement – Copyright infringement represents the process of using the work that is protected by copyright law without permission. It is a practice that needs to be avoided as it might lead to disputes and penalties for your blog.

69. Dashboard – A dashboard is a page in the management tool which provides multiple options for using the features available. As a blog owner, you get access to your blog dashboard which allows you to manage blog and blog content.

70. Digital marketing – Digital marketing uses digital technologies for the promotion of the products or services. It is also known as online marketing and internet marketing because the internet is the main technology used for promotion.

71. E-commerce – E-commerce (short for electronic commerce) is the process of buying and selling online.

72. Email marketing – Email marketing is a segment of online marketing, and it includes the promotion of products or services through email campaigns.

73. Email protocol – Email protocol is a method through which communication is established between two computers which exchange emails. It enables email transfer from the computer sending the email to the computer receiving the email.

74. Engaging – In online marketing, engaging refers to the quality of being able to encourage a certain action from online users. If the content is engaging, it means that is inspiring, informative, people share and recommend this content and provide feedback.

75. External link – An external link is a link that points to a web page that is not on your own blog.

76. Featured image – Featured image (also called post thumbnail) is an image that represents the post. It is shown as a part of post preview on the homepage, related posts or when shared on social networks. It may or may not be included in the actual post.

77. Followers – A follower is a person who follows someone's activity. It is usually used in the context of social media, where followers are social media users who follow social media profiles.

78. Google's partner website – Google's Partner site is a website that has been approved by Google to run AdSense advertisements on their site.

79. HTML – Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) is a standardized system for tagging text files on the web pages.

80. Influencer – Influencer is an individual with authority, knowledge and/or position to influence and persuade people. Influencers usually have a significant number of social media followers and/or blog subscribers.

81. Internal link – An internal link is a link that points to another blog page on your blog.

82. Keyword – Keyword is a term or phrase of significant importance to the blog content. It describes the content and instructs search engines what the content is about. Blogs usually have multiple keywords and keyword phrases. In an article, usually there is one primary keyword, which has the highest relevance, and there can be one or more secondary keywords.

83. Lead generation – Lead generation is the process of attracting the online users who are potentially interested in becoming your subscribers or customers. This strategy involves the use of multiple lead generation tactics.

84. Link building – It is a part of off-site optimization which includes activities that will help earn links to your blog pages.

85. Link profile – In online marketing, link profile is the term used to describe the collection of links that point to a website or blog. A good link profile is the one that includes links from high authority web pages.

86. Mailing list – It is a list of email addresses of your subscribers or previous customers who agreed to receive email updates from you.

87. Merchant – In affiliate marketing, a merchant is a person or a company that creates an affiliate program in order to increase sales and promote products (or services). Merchants are also known as advertisers. They make affiliate programs available for affiliates to join.

88. Meta description – This is an HTML tag that shows a snippet of the page that summarize a page content. Meta description is shown in the search engine result pages below the title. It is recommended to use a keyword in the meta description.

89. Newsletter – It is a type of email campaign that is usually sent to your subscribers at a regular pace. Most often, a newsletter contains the latest news, event announcement, the latest blog articles, etc.

90. Online marketing – Online marketing is the process of advertising the products or services using the internet and multiple online channels such as search engines, social media, email campaigns, etc. It is also known as digital or internet marketing.

91. Online presence – This term refers to your online presentation which is available to the online users. Online presence is created on your blog but it also refers to your social media online presence, activities in the online communities, and other public profiles and accounts that represent your blog.

92. Optimization – The process of optimization refers to improving the features of something to increase its performance. For example, blog post optimization refers to exploring the features of the blog post and improving those to enhance its optimization and thus improve its visibility in the search engines.

93. Organic traffic – Organic traffic includes traffic obtained in a free or organic way. It only includes free reach, without the use of paid promotion to increase this reach.

94. Outbound link – An outbound link is the link that takes the users to another web page that is not a part of your blog.

95. Page load time – This refers to the time needed for the page to load. Since page load time is one of the metrics that affect how search engines rank web pages, it is necessary to improve page load time using different optimization methods.

96. Page rank – Page rank is used for evaluating the importance of a web page through the algorithm that uses different metrics to rank web pages.

97. Paid traffic – As opposed to organic traffic, paid traffic is obtained through paid ads which are shown to the online users. In essence, it is paid reach, where you pay to run a campaign where your blog page(s) are shared with online users, most commonly in the search engine result pages and on social networks.

98. Penalty – Penalty is a type of punishment which usually includes a decrease or even removal from the search engine ranking. Web pages that use illegitimate methods of optimization or infringe copyrights may be penalized by the search engines.

99. Pop-up – It is a new "window" that appears over the blog content. A pop-up window usually features some sort of CTA button or advertisement.

100. Publisher – In affiliate marketing, a publisher is a person or an organization that participates in the process of advertising through affiliate links. Publishers are also known as affiliates.

101. Redirect – Redirects refer to URL redirections (the process is also known as URL forwarding). It is a method where a visit to one URL is redirected to another URL. These redirects happen automatically, and they usually have a certain status code which defines why redirection is taking place.

102. ROI – ROI (short for return on investment) represents the process of comparing the performance with the investment to evaluate the efficiency of the strategy used. The other term used for ROI is profitability ratio.

103. Search engine – It is a program used to search for information on the internet. All of the publicly available content is indexed and stored in search engine's database and displayed in response to the relevant search query.

104. Search engine guidelines – The process of indexing and ranking websites is not fully explained in order to prevent taking advantage of the system. Instead, a set of search engine guidelines is available as a list of recommended practices that are said to could help with improving ranking and increasing site's visibility.

105. Search engine marketing – Search engine marketing (SEM) is a part of online marketing that includes promotion by increasing visibility in the search engines, mainly through paid ads in the search engine result pages.

106. Search engine optimization – Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of optimizing the website or blog to improve its rank in the search engine result pages. This is done through on-site and off-site search engine optimization.

107. Search engine rank – Search engine rank is the position a web page has when the search engine result page is shown to the online users. High search engine rank increases the visibility and a potential number of visitors.

108. Search query – Search query is the term online users type in the search engines when they want to research it.

109. Search engine result page – Search engine result page (SERP) is the page shown as a response to the search query. It represents the list of results (organic and paid) which are relevant for the search query.

110. Sidebar – It is a narrow vertical area on a web page that contains information such as blogger's bio, related articles, banners, etc.

111. Social media marketing – Social media marketing (SMM) is a part of online marketing focused on the promotion of a business through social media platforms. It includes a set of strategies that use social networks as a platform for implementing those strategies.

112. Social network algorithm – Social networks have an algorithm that affects the visibility of social media status updates and how users see their newsfeed. The goal of the algorithm is to anticipate what the social media users would expect and need to see, and thus show the most relevant results.

113. Social traffic – It is traffic originating from social media platforms.

114. Spiders (or crawlers) – Search engines have internet bots which are called spiders or crawlers. Their purpose is to index web through the process of crawling new pages. They discover and crawl new pages using links existing in their database.

115. Strategy – In relation to online marketing, a strategy is defined as an overall plan which includes goals and activities that need to be completed to achieve those goals.

116. Subscribe – When a person subscribes to your blog, they give you consent for you to send them email campaigns in the future.

117. Subscribe button – Subscribe button enables blog visitors to submit their email address and become a member of a mailing list.

118. Target group – Target group is a term used to refer to the group of people who you are trying to reach with your online presence. Those are online users most likely to be interested in your blog content.

119. Targeting options – Targeting options include multiple features in the paid advertising that enable you to target online users based on specific criteria. Targeting options are available when setting up search engine ads or social media ads.

120.   URL – Uniform Resource Locator (URL) is the web address of an online resource. It points to a web page. The URL of the homepage starts with www., followed by domain name, and it ends with the domain extension.

121.   Visibility – In online marketing, visibility represents the likelihood of a blog or website being shown in the search engine results.

16

Questionnaire

16. Questionnaire

Questions

1. Which of these are popular types of blog content?

a) How-to articles

b) Lists

c) Podcasts

d) All of the above

2. Evergreen content is:

a) A special type of a guest post

b) A type of content that is always relevant to the topic that is constant

c) A type of content about the current news

d) The same as compounding blog post

3. Which of these pages has information about the blog author(s)?

a) About us page

b) Shop page

c) Contact us page

d) Resource page

4. What is the main advantage of using blog plugins?

a) Usefulness

b) Increasing page load time

c) Security issues and too many redirects

d) All of the above

5. What you need to think about when choosing blog monetization methods?

a) VPS and shared hosting

b) Long-term goals

c) Domain name

d) Plugins and blog extensions

6. Which of these are the things you need to consider when choosing a hosting provider?

a) Hosted platforms such as Medium, Tumblr, etc.

b) If it offers email from your domain, backups, support, enough storage, and data transfer

c) VPS and dedicated hosting

d) The number of templates you can choose for your blog

7. Which of these are the essentials when planning your blog?

a) Domain name

b) Logo and graphics

c) Blogging strategy

d) All of the above

8. Blogs have:

a) Static pages sorted in reverse chronological order

b) Dynamic pages sorted in chronological order

c) Static pages sorted in chronological order

d) Dynamic pages sorted in reverse chronological order

9. What can help with building influence on social media?

a) Automated sharing using a plugin

b) Understanding your audience and using a personalized approach

c) Paid SEM reach

d) All of the above

10. Search engines discover new content through:

a) Database

b) Blog comments

c) Links

d) Paid reach

11. What is a sitemap?

a) A collection of all blog pages grouped into one file

b) The process of indexing a blog page

c) A type of blog content

d) All of the above

12. In terms of online marketing, niche represents:

a) A static page

b) A type of how-to article

c) A topic you are focused on

d) Your target group

13. If you want to feature a lot of content in multiple categories, on the blog home page, which layout you should use?

a) One-column

b) Two-column

c) Portfolio

d) Magazine

14. What is anchor text?

a) The title of the blog article

b) The URL of the page

c) The clickable word or phrase that links to another page

d) User-friendly content

15. Which of these strategies is used to create user-friendly content?

a) Provide summary at the beginning to get readers interested

b) Use bullets and headings to emphasize important parts of the text

c) Write short sentences and paragraphs

d) All of the above

16. Which of these helps with getting your blog pages indexed?

a) Making sure your content is optimized

b) Having a sitemap

c) Getting links

d) All of the above

17. Which of these is a self-hosted blogging platform?

a) Wordpress.org

b) Wordpress.com

c) Medium

d) Blogger

18. What is the disadvantage of using blog plugins?

a) Potential bugs

b) Negative effect on blog load time

c) Security issues

d) All of the above

19. Which of these is a benefit of hosted blogging platforms?

a) No possibility to customize a domain name

b) No possibility to optimize a server

c) No server installation or management

d) Control in regard to monetization techniques

20. Content planning, as a part of blogging strategy, requires creating:

a) Domain name

b) Content calendar

c) Alt text

d) All of the above

21. Images are optimized using:

a) SEO-friendly page

b) Alt Text

c) Canonical tag

d) Friendly URL

22. Which of these is used to define the target group?

a) Language

b) Location

c) Behavior

d) All of the above

23. When editing an article, you need to:

a) Highlight relevant parts of the text

b) Express strong opinion or shocking fact

c) Provide a "next step" suggestion

d) Create an outline

24. Based on general blogging guidelines, a powerful title should:

a) Create an outline

b) Highlight relevant parts of the text

c) Have relevant keywords

d) All of the above

25. Content that is optimized based on the search engine guidelines is:

a) SEO-friendly

b) SEO

c) Keyword friendly

d) Without images

26. Which of these type of hosting services is usually recommended for beginner bloggers?

a) VPS hosting

b) Dedicated hosting

c) No hosting

d) Shared hosting

27. What does front-end represent?

a) An online dashboard for blog management

b) Blog layout available to the public

c) A blogging platform

d) A content type

28. What is a blogging platform?

a) Blog layout available to the public

b) Software used to create a blog

c) A type of content

d) A compounding blog post

29. Which of these is visual content format?

a) Audio content

b) Infographics

c) Podcasts

d) All of the above

30. What does unique visits metric indicate?

a) The flow of the visits with pages viewed by the visitors

b) The number of returning visitors

c) The number of individuals who have seen the content

d) The average time spend on your blog pages per session

31. How can you invite blog visitors to interact in order to increase engagement?

a) Ask a question

b) Ask for their opinion

c) Create a challenge and invite them to participate

d) All of the above

32. Which metric can indicate how engaging your content is?

a) Average session duration

b) Referral traffic

c) New visits

d) All of the above

33. What is a conversion?

a) A CTA

b) A desired action

c) A recurring visitor

d) A type of blog content

34. What is blog hosting?

a) It is a virtual online space used to host a blog.

b) It is a blogging platform.

c) It is a content strategy.

d) It is a hosted blogging platform.

35. What do you need to consider when choosing a blog template?

a) Customization options included in the template

b) Layout of the mock-up pages

c) Latest updates and whether the template is updated regularly

d) All of the above

36. If you want to create a blog layout without any content in the sidebars, which template type you should choose?

a) One-column

b) Two-column

c) Three-column

d) Grid

37. Which of these is a characteristic of conversational writing style?

a) Use of many technical terms

b) Long sentences

c) Short sentences

d) All of the above

38. Which of these is a tactic for increasing blog engagement?

a) Organizing a community

b) Organizing an activity

c) Putting the readers in the spotlight

d) All of the above

39. When you want to show related content in a blog post, which strategy you can use?

a) Optimize blog title and the URL

b) Include internal links in the text

c) Use personalization method when writing

d) Organize a paid community for members

40. What do plugins allow?

a) Creating blog menus and categories

b) Additional customization and optimization options

c) Layout of the mock-up pages

d) Choosing between content types

41. Which of these steps is included in the process of writing an article?

a) Writing a title

b) Creating an outline

c) Proofreading and editing

d) All of the above

42. Which of these steps help you with promoting blog content on social media?

a) Creating a recognizable social media presence and sharing your blog content

b) Search engine advertising campaign

c) Using personalization method when writing

d) Optimizing blog title and the URL

43. What are the characteristics of extraordinary continent?

a) Uniqueness

b) Consistency in writing

c) Completeness of information

d) All of the above

44. Which of these can be used as a tactic to engage the readers in the intro?

a) Proofreading and editing

b) Expressing strong opinion or shocking fact

c) Providing a "next step" suggestion

d) Restating the main idea

45. Which of these factors affect mobile optimization?

a) Page load time

b) Friendly URL

c) Canonical tag

d) All of the above

46. Responsive design means that the page:

a) Has several redirects

b) Automatically adapts to the screen size

c) Automatically forwards the user to another page

d) Features custom design

47. When it comes to promoting blog content with email marketing, it is important to:

a) Find relevant blogs to promote your content

b) Use paid promotion such as social media and search engine ads

c) Start creating your mailing list from the moment your blog is live

d) Identify the contacts you want to contact during blogger outreach

48. Which of these parts of online marketing are important for successful blogging?

a) SEO

b) Email marketing

c) Social media marketing

d) All of the above

49. Which blog monetization method relies on the use of the special links with tracking codes?

a) Sponsored content

b) Affiliate marketing

c) Banners

d) All of the above

50. Which of these is a tactic used for promotion on social media?

a) Organic reach

b) Paid reach

c) Collaboration with brands

d) All of the above

Answers

1. d	18. d	35. d
2. b	19. c	36. a
3. a	20. b	37. c
4. a	21. b	38. d
5. b	22. d	39. b
6. b	23. a	40. b
7. d	24. c	41. d
8. d	25. a	42. a
9. b	26. d	43. d
10. c	27. b	44. b
11. a	28. b	45. a
12. c	29. b	46. b
13. d	30. c	47. c
14. c	31. d	48. d
15. d	32. a	49. b
16. d	33. b	50. d
17. a	34. a	

17

Conclusion

17. Conclusion

The final impressions those interested in blogging get is that starting a blog has never been easier. There are so many platforms, tools, and online tutorials to guide you through the process, even if you are entirely new to this digital marketing world.

At the same time, blogging has never been more difficult. Numerous challenges might get in your way, but what is most difficult is to stay in the game. So many blogs start every minute, covering all sorts of topics you might imagine. One would think that the blogosphere has become so crowded that one more blog would hardly make any difference. More importantly, it will barely have any influence.

Although these are obvious challenges, when you start a blog, you must not cave in to such thoughts. You have to believe in your idea and your blog, to strive to achieve your goals and succeed in the online world.

Here are some final thoughts to think about.

Blogging and online marketing

On several occasions in this ebook, you have noticed how online marketing and blogging are connected. First, you have SEO, as a necessary step to position your blog content. Then there are social networks, as a way to share your content with online audience. Other areas, you should explore, include:

Email marketing

One of the most powerful weapons of bloggers is their mailing list. Many types of research have confirmed that email marketing brings the highest ROI out of all online marketing sectors. This is why building a mailing list should be one of your top priorities from the start.

When you have a mailing list of high quality, with subscribers who are genuinely interested in hearing from you, you will have the tool to turn this influence and your blog into something more. You will build a following that will promote you as a blogger and open so many new opportunities to grow your blog.

Search engine marketing

Search engine ads are definitely a quick solution to attract new visitors when you first start, and you hardly see any visits from organic reach. However, do not use these campaigns just for the sake of few new visits.

Instead, create a marketing campaign with specific goals which you will achieve through this kind of paid online promotion. Also, make sure you understand the process of setting up search engines ads, as well as the best ways to target and customize your ads.

Affiliate marketing

Another type of online marketing which is often linked to blogging is affiliate marketing. In essence, this is the type of online marketing that is focused on the promotion of products and services of other businesses (called merchants). A blogger is an affiliate (or publisher) who shares affiliate links which generate commission based on the percentage of sale price.

Having a successful blog and lots of trust among your visitors increases the likelihood of them clicking on these links. As a result, you are able to get better deals and increase the number of conversions you achieve.

Being a successful blogger does not only require being a good writer. To succeed as a blogger, you need to be a marketer as well. Knowledge about online marketing is extremely helpful for boosting the performance of your blog and improving your blogging strategy. Therefore, the next step for you is to explore each segment of online marketing in more details. This will help you extend your knowledge of online practices and how blogging is an inseparable part of the online world.

Building community

The importance of community lies in interaction. There are two aspects of communities to have in mind. Firstly, as a blogger, you are a member of a broader community known as the blogosphere. Through interaction on social networks, blog commenting, collaborations and blogger meetups, you get to become a member of blogging communities from your niche, from your local town, etc. Having these connections is very helpful for building your influence and discovering potential opportunities. It is also useful for exchanging experience.

The other aspect of community building is the community you create with your blog visitors. Working on building respect and good relationships with your visitors is a strategy that can help you with boosting your blog performance. Having a community offers exclusiveness and motive for people to take part. It can also come with additional perks such as early access to premium content, exclusive downloadable materials, etc.

Along the line, there is an option to monetize community by introducing membership fee, or simply by advertising paid content or products to the community members. Unlike regular visitors, they are more likely to buy from you because they know you and they trust your opinion.

Planning and documenting

Regardless if you start blogging as a hobby or you plan to become the influencer in your industry and make a living through your blog, planning and documenting your blogging strategy should be a routine you adopt early on.

All that documentation and reporting might seem too corporate and business-oriented for you, but here is the thing. You cannot evaluate any of your performance without comparing the results with the plan. Furthermore, you cannot find the formula for success unless you document everything which allows you to detect the good and the bad of the strategy you are currently implementing.

These are two main documents you need to have:

Plan

This will list all of the goals you want to achieve, as well as the actions that you will implement to achieve those goals. A plan will be your roadmap to help you keep your blogging activity focused on the goals.

Documented strategy

As you start implementing your planned strategy, document the results along the way. Let this be a sort of a blogging journal for you. Things like "*[post title] got lots of social shares*", "*collaboration with [influencer] was a success, resulting in [number] of leads*", or "*poor sign-up rate using the signup button*", etc. are only some ideas what your documentation should include. Basically, anything that can be helpful to evaluate your blog performance should be here.

In the end, compare the two documents, to detect both the strengths and weaknesses of your blogging strategy. Use the information to refine your blogging and discover new ways how you can grow your blog and improve your career of being a blogger.

Reasons to start a blog

Although blog monetization is a common motive for starting a blog, it is not the only one. People start blogging for many different reasons, and those often include:

- Share what you know

- Inspire others

- Promote what you do

- Build your reputation

- Reach online users (potential clients or customers)

- Attract specific audience (meet new people, stay connected with people you know)

- Create opportunities (such as job opportunity, possibility to travel, participate in conferences, etc.)

- Become a better writer and more comfortable with exposure

- Personal development (stay active, become knowledgeable, improve your skills)

- Professional development (keep up with the industry-related events, conferences, follow the new practices and relevant standards, etc.)

Each of these can be a motive for you to start blogging, but at the end of the day, you need to explore the topic of blogging to be able to create a blog that performs well and stands out.

Blogging checklist

To summarize everything, and create a sort of a template you can follow for your blog posting, here is a quick blogging checklist.

√ Come up with a topic (or check your content calendar if you already have defined topics you want to write about)

√ Research the topic on the internet

√ Brainstorm the ideas

√ Start writing content following the best practices

√ Edit and proofread the content

√ Optimize the content for search engines

√ Find or design visual elements to accompany this blog post

√ Create a new draft page on your blogging platform

√ Upload the article

√ Choose the adequate settings (category, tags, publishing date, etc.)

√ Publish the content on your blog and proofread again (check if links work, images are displayed correctly, etc.)

√ Share the article on your social media profiles

√ Share the article with your subscribers

√ Consider other ways for the promotion of the article

Feel free to adapt and adjust this list to make a custom checklist to help you when creating and promoting your blog content.

The final thought

Everything you create as a blogger should be based on your understanding of the target audience. After all, the feedback you get from your readers is the most relevant metric you should have in

mind. Regardless if you try is to teach them, to entertain them, to help them solve a problem. Your goal is always to reach and affect online users.

All of the practice above, including SEO and paid promotions, are also designed with this goal in mind.

Finally, your content is what is going to be a deciding factor in how successful your blog is. Focus on creating content of an outstanding quality that will appeal to your target group. Only then will you be able to make loyal following and discover true possibilities of becoming an influential blogger.