


# **Instant** **Niche RICHES**

- 
- **Finding a niche market**
  - **Creating a product fast**
  - **Generating cheap and free traffic**
  - **Profiting in your chosen niche**

Copyright © 2007. All Rights Reserved.

Unauthorized duplication or distribution of this material in any form is strictly prohibited. Violators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the author/publisher.

The author, publisher, and distributor of this product assume no responsibility for the use or misuse of this product, or for any injury, damage and/or financial loss sustained to persons or property as a result of using this report.

While every effort has been made to ensure reliability of the information within, the liability, negligence or otherwise, or from any use, misuse or abuse of the operation of any methods, strategies, instructions or ideas contained in the material herein is the sole responsibility of the reader.

The reader is encouraged to seek competent legal and accounting advice before engaging in any business activity.

Here's An **Incredibly Simple Way** You Can Cut Through All the Garbage - Once and For All - to **Quickly and Easily** Find Affiliate Products With **Super HIGH Conversion Rates** and EVEN **HIGHER COMMISSIONS!...**



**MonsterCommissions.com**

The affiliate marketing membership that pays 100% instant commissions on every product... every time!

**[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)**

(Memberships are limited)

## **Instant Niche Riches**

### **Chapter 1 - What is a Niche Market?**

**Some Categories of Niche Markets**

**The Importance of Niches**

### **Chapter 2 - Finding your Niche**

**Marketing is psychology**

**So, what's your niche?**

**Some niches I've stumbled upon...**

**Some others that I'm not directly interested in:**

**What's the point of all this?**

### **Chapter 3 - The Keys to your Niche Market**

**One Caveat**

**The Market Detective**

**Getting a handle on the data:**

**Conclusion**

### **Chapter 4 - Finding the Money in a Niche Topic**

**The Thrill of the Hunt**

**Google Trends**

**Search Engine Watch**

**Reality Check**

### **Chapter 5 - Deciding your Profit Model**

**The Product Model**

**The Content Model**

**Mix and Match**

## **Chapter 6 - The Niche Content Site**

**The Difference between 'White Hat SEO' and 'Black Hat SEO'  
Content**

**Stuff-a-Blog**

**Blogger Search**

**Ezine Articles**

**Visitor-Driven Content**

**Ads**

## **Chapter 7 - The Paid Product Model**

**Niche markets and the Novelty Item**

**The Niche Market Ebook**

**Getting a Freelancer**

## **Chapter 8 - Selling your Product Online**

**Making a sales pitch**

**How to appeal to the niche psychology**

## **Chapter 9 - Hustling Traffic**

**Submit your site**

**Use your sig**

**Publish link-bait**

**Use blog directories**

**Use "Dummy" pages**

**Post search-bait in your blog**

**Wait three months**

**And now... some dirty tricks...**

## **Chapter 10 - Making your Online Business Grow**

**Thou shalt always be extremely well-informed**

**Thou shalt call thyself an entrepreneur, and act like one**

**Thou shalt always promote thy site**

**Thou shalt be a bookworm**

**Thou shalt expand thy market**

**...and in closing:**

# **Chapter 1 - What is a Niche Market?**

Internet niche marketing is one of the fastest growing industries around. The Internet has become a vital resource for many and with so many people regularly using the Internet; smart investors are realizing the potential for generating a profit from society's ever growing dependence on the Internet. This Ebook will provide useful information for those who are interested in learning more about this cutting edge market and beginning a potentially lucrative career in niche marketing.

### **Researching Niche Marketing on the Internet**

It may come as a surprise to some, but one of the most obvious ways to research the subject of niche marketing is via the Internet. The Internet is filled with websites offering information related to the subject of niche marketing. There are informational websites offering instructional articles and success stories, message boards offering a place for those involved or interested in the industry to share information or ask questions and commercial websites offering ebooks, classes and other instructional services for a fee.

Websites which have informative articles may provide a great deal of information for visitors but care should be taken to verify the information obtained online. This is important because although the Internet can provide

a great deal of accurate information, there is also the potential for websites to spread misinformation as well.

A great deal about niche marketing can also be learned via the Internet by examining the websites of direct competitors in your niche. This is an important step because the competitors' websites can be used to determine which elements of the website design are most effective for reaching potential customers. Understanding this will help the website owner to create a niche website which is superior to the competition.

### Learning Internet Niche Marketing through Ebooks

Ebooks are another way for those who are interested in Internet niche marketing to learn about the industry. Ebooks are similar to published books but they are made available in a software format as opposed to printed on paper. You may find many different ebooks on the subject of Internet niche marketing online. Most of these ebooks are available for purchase but a few are offered free of charge. Downloading a free ebook on the subject may be helpful but many of the higher quality ebooks do charge a fee to download their ebook.

In selecting an ebook on the subject of Internet niche marketing, care should be taken to purchase an ebook from a reputable source. One way to do this is to search for reviews of the ebook from independent reviewers. This is important because these reviewers have no vested interest in promoting the ebook and will likely provide an honest evaluation of the quality of the ebook.

### An Education in Internet Niche Marketing



Finally learning about Internet niche marketing may come in the form of a higher education degree. Universities are beginning to recognize the vastness of Internet niche marketing and are starting to offer classes related to this industry. These courses may be offered as part of a curriculum in advertising and sales or may be offered independently for those who want to learn more about the subject. Participation in these independent courses may not even require matriculation. Additionally, independent courses may even be offered as online courses making it even easier for those who are hoping to learn more about the industry while maintaining a job in another industry.

Let's start an online business! Now, what do we sell? Hey, I know, I've seen a lot of buzz this year about the home console gaming market! We can have a site focused on the XBox 360, the Nintendo Wii, and the PlayStation 3. According to my search-engine keyword analysis, this is the field to be in. There's tons of customers for this market.

So we start our site, and check our stats (and profits from advertising) a few months later. Whoops, we aren't doing so well. To find out why, we enter our keywords into the search engines and discover that some fifty sites pop up before ours, and here we've already done our site by the "SEO book"! Our mistake was in picking a fight we can't win.

See, a whole lot of websites came before us and did the same things that we did. Our ideas weren't very original. All we did was go by the formula that has led many others to success, but we're just chasing our competitor's tail-lights. We can study all of the web marketing tricks we want, but as long as we have such a fantastically broad market, we're going to have to put up

with a lot of competition. And the search-engine-driven market of the Internet doesn't allow for a lot of winners.

To understand why niche markets are so important, we first have to examine the "Prisoner's Dilemma". Briefly, this is an exercise in game theory which illustrates a situation in which a range of strategies is presented so that if all of the players try to be the sole winner, none of them will win. If all of the players try a co-operative strategy, they all get a "second-place" win. If one player goes for the "first-place" win while the rest agree to co-operate, that one player will cheat all of the others of even a partial victory.

The 2001 movie "A Beautiful Mind" has a segment devoted to the Nobel-prize-winning John Nash's work in game theory. In it, he illustrates the predicament of four men competing for the affection of the most beautiful woman at the bar, which only one of them can win. The movie also features several scenes involving the Asian board-game of "Go", which also requires an understanding of game theory in order to win.

Now, I'm not a statistic mathematician, and I don't want to force you, the reader, to be one either. So without diving too deep into the heavy science, let's take a look at some real-world models. Say that we have a group of car salesmen in our small town who can choose what model to sell. And suppose that we simplify the market down to three makes of vehicle: Ford, Chevrolet, and Toyota. If Ford has a market share of 60%, Chevrolet has a market share of 30%, and Toyota has a market share of 10%, and we have four dealers on the market, what strategy is best for each dealer?

If all four dealers try to head straight for the Ford market, even if all four are top salesman, the best they can hope for is one-fourth of 60%, or 15%.

Customers who are loyal to Chevrolets and Toyotas will simply head out of town. That's 40% of the market going down the drain! Eventually, one auto seller will start getting into Chevrolets and Toyotas, perhaps even abandoning Fords. Now the three remaining dealers in the Ford market get 20% each, and are quite thrilled about it. But the Chevrolet and Toyota dealer is quietly doing double their business!

We see big businesses failing to understand this concept every day. Take food in America:

1. I like spinach pasta, but every store in my area doesn't carry it. They each have a whole aisle devoted to a hundred kinds of wheat pasta. As a result, I settle grudgingly for the wheat, but I'd buy a lot more pasta if I had some variety.
2. Or consider the fast food restaurant: a burger, fries, and a coke. Since so many restaurants offer this same staple, there's really no difference which one I go to. But given a choice, I'd rather have a club sandwich, deep-fried zucchini, and iced tea. Since nobody caters to my market, I have given up on fast food entirely. When we do dine out, we usually go for ethnic cuisine such as Chinese or Italian.
3. And for another matter, I smoke, but I only smoke pipes. The smell of cigarettes to a pipe-smoker is just as foul as it is to a non-smoker. Yet every convenience store I walk into stocks the same fifty brands of cigarette packs, and no pipe tobacco! Thankfully, there is a specialized tobacco store in town, and they get 100% of my business. After all, if I'm going to keep my bad habit, I might as well make it as enjoyable as possible, right?

## **Some Categories of Niche Markets**

Linked with the concept of niches is the concept of a "market demographic profile". There are many general ways to break the base of customers into segments, and if you break them down far enough, each of them qualifies as a broad, general niche. Here's a few examples:

### *Age-based niches*

This is a common example, and one which most businesses are aware of. Only a fool would air commercials for denture adhesives and medic alert tags during a cartoon, or commercials for sugary breakfast cereals and toys during "The Price is Right". Everywhere we go, we seek needs appropriate to our age group.

### *Ethnic-and-Religion-based niches*

Here again, but somewhat less, we see that businesses usually "get it", but sometimes less. Have you noticed lately, that some fast-food restaurants have started putting more minorities in their television commercials? Notably Pizza Hut and McDonalds in America have gone for greater diversity in their markets. Some businesses are keenly aware that a large part of their market is of a certain color or creed, while others seem to be almost entirely blind to it. Next time you drive past a string of car dealerships, notice that some of them take the trouble to display a sign that says, "Se Habla Espanol". Whoosh! The Hispanic market flocks to that dealership.

Related to the concept of race is the culture surrounding particular religions. Religions carry with them a lifestyle determined by the beliefs of its members. A religion that has strict dietary requirements is more likely to head for a restaurant that doesn't serve the kinds of foods they believe are

contrary to their beliefs. Check out a magazine or website focused on a particular religion, and notice the kinds of ads it runs. A group of teetotalers certainly aren't going to favor a liquor store, and a group which restricts the consumption of meat won't be giving the local butcher much business.

### *Political-and-Social-based niches*

Another easy one to grasp, if the American market activity is anything to go by. NASCAR sports and Republicans. Nature shows and Democrats. Hunting and Second-Amendment fans. Newspapers and First-Amendment fans. Where do you sell your Hummers? On the FOX network, naturally! What about Volkswagens and Kias? Better hustle those on PBS.

Back in my dorm, we had a pretty solid division between right-wing members who listened to mostly country and mainstream rock, and left-wings who listened to largely alternative rock. One character I remember very well was half punk-rocker and half country-and-western! He deliberately made mix tapes which played Dead Kennedys after Garth Brooks after the Ramones after Hank Williams. He did it mostly to amuse himself, I think, and possibly to drive anybody who tried to categorize him crazy.

Speaking of young people and music, let's examine one of the most elusive kinds of niche markets:

### *Lifestyle-based niches*

Try a fun self-test: to members of what kind of lifestyle would each of the following lines be funny?

- a) "I'm so dark, I fart bats!"
- b) "Very funny, Scotty, now beam up my clothes!"
- c) "Which one is the 'Any' key?"
- d) "God didn't make Adam and Steve."

You see, each of these lines are "inside jokes", which serve as a cultural recognition device; they each play on ideas that are common to a specific lifestyle. If you see any of these on a T-shirt or bumper sticker and you aren't familiar with the target culture, you're sitting there saying "I don't get it." If you're in the culture, of course, you're laughing yourself silly (or at least you were the first time you heard it!). Not to keep you in suspense a moment longer:

A) Would be "the Goth lifestyle". Goths are one of the lifestyles popular with young people today, and have a huge following. Some hallmarks of the Goth culture are the movies of Tim Burton, the novels of Anne Rice, music identifying itself as "Gothic rock", and clothing that is black and leathery. The whole Goth lifestyle revolves around a darkly morbid point of view, and so their music is moody and despairing, they are huge fans of ghost and vampire stories, and so on. Goths, being relatively new and young, are frequently found to be having impromptu boasting contests as to who is "more Goth".

B) Is a common line amongst "Trekkies" Trekkies are fans of the popular science fiction show "Star Trek", and all the derivative spin-offs and movies. A common line on the original show was uttered by the captain, "Beam me up, Scotty!", an instruction for the engineer on board the ship to use the transporter (a fictional device) to teleport him from the planet's surface back

to the ship. This line plays on the humorous idea (never a real scene!) that Scotty just might once have thought to play a joke on the captain by beaming him naked onto the ship while leaving his clothes behind, since the captain never specified to "Beam me *and my clothes* up."

C) That would be the computer culture, and most particularly those who work a technical support desk helping computer users! A common instruction by a program to a user is "Press any key to continue...". The instruction of course means any of the keys on the keyboard will make the program go to the next screen, but the joke plays on how computer users are sometimes trying to operate a machine when they have no idea of what's going on and take everything literally. Tech support people routinely trade "horror stories" about their difficulty in trying to walk "clueless" users through the steps of operating their computers.

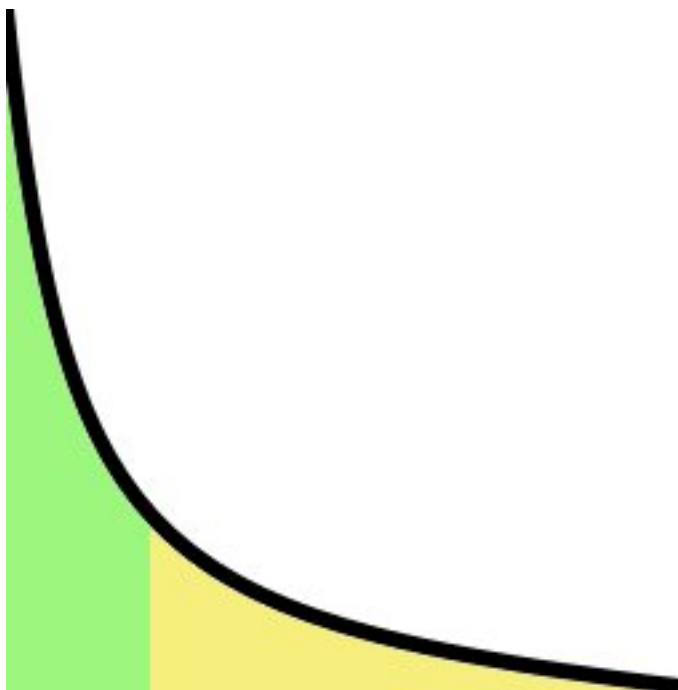
D) A Christian heterosexual who is opposed to the gay and lesbian lifestyle would consider this a funny joke. The Christian creation story holds that God created Adam and Eve, a man and woman who formed the first couple, and that same-sex pairings are contrary to the nature intended by the deity.

Lifestyles are the most ephemeral of market segments. People may change their lifestyles over time, as new cultural movements and fads come and go. The hard part about marketing to a lifestyle sector is that it is always a little bit impenetrable to outsiders, and yet the business that displays its identification with that lifestyle will tend to corner its business.

## The Importance of Niches

It is only recently that niche marketing has won wide-spread favor. The main reason is that the Internet has made niche marketing more feasible. Before the Internet, a niche populated by a total of one thousand people scattered all over the Earth would have been impossible to reach. Put those 1000 people on the Internet, and they all search Google for a keyword phrase associated with their own interest which lands them at the one site that caters to that interest. Presto! A new niche market is born.

The ground-breaking book, "The Long Tail" by Chris Anderson, is one recent work that analyzed the niche market strategy. The name "the Long Tail" comes from what a graph looks like if we record the market sectors of any category of product ranked by popularity. Here's the proverbial picture worth a thousand words:





You can find this shape in the statistical distributions of many markets. Typically, there will be one or two hugely popular brands or varieties and as many as hundreds of less popular brands or varieties. In this graph, you could say that the chart is the beverage market and the green area is milk and soda, while the yellow area is fruit juices, vegetable juices, alcoholic beverages, flavored waters, energy drinks, yogurt shakes, etc. Or you could call the graph computer systems, and the big green area is Microsoft, while the yellow area is Apple, Linux, BSD, Solaris, OS/2 Warp, ReactOS, Plan Nine from Bell Labs, and so on. Now, if this were your market, which part would you go for? If you go for the green area, you'll be competing with thousands of others who have the same idea. If you go for the yellow area, you'll usually have a bigger patch all to yourself - and the undying loyalty of a customer base!

You see many examples of "long tail" marketing all over the Internet, but the full realization of the power of this marketing method is just beginning to be understood. In the rest of this book, we're going to thoroughly explore the niche marketing strategy. Our studies will range from dry and scholarly to freakishly quirky, but always will be covering some very exciting territory!

## Why Choosing a Niche is Important in Internet Marketing

Internet marketing is quickly becoming one of the most profitable types of marketing available. The Internet has the capability of reaching a wide audience and those who take advantage of this widespread reach find themselves in a position where they can benefit greatly from potential clients from all over the world.

There are many who are attempting to profit from Internet marketing but those who are truly successful realize the importance of focusing their efforts on a specific niche. This means the investor focuses his marketing effort on a specific area of interest. This enables the investor to have a more focused strategy for reaching potential customers.

## Finding Your Niche

The key to finding a niche in the world of Internet marketing is finding a balance between an area which is of interest to a wide audience but is also an area which is not already saturated on the Internet. This is because a niche which is already saturated on the Internet may not be profitable because there is already so much competition for the interest and business of the target audience's attention. Investors marketing in these areas would have to be truly innovative and far superior to the competitors already on the market to secure a share of the market.

Conversely, a niche which is not already saturated has room for savvy entrepreneurs to begin marketing to their target audience. In this scenario the audience is hungry for more marketing in this area and smart investors realize what it takes to feed this appetite. These potential clients are looking for quality products or services and investors who know how to make finding their products or services on the Internet a simple process.

We have already spoken about the importance of choosing a niche where the Internet is not already saturated but there is consumer interest but the other key component to selecting a niche is choosing a subject for which you have a passion. This is important because your passion for a particular subject will translate well to profit for a number of reasons. First of all your

passion will drive you to succeed. Secondly you will likely produce higher quality products and services if you are marketing a niche you enjoy because you have more intrinsic knowledge of the needs of your customers. The consumers will recognize your love for the products and services you promote and reward you with their business and their loyalty.

### Can You Profit Without Finding Your Niche?

Those who are involved in Internet marketing may find that it is possible to profit without focusing on specific niches but in many cases this is not an easy task. All aspects of Internet marketing become exponentially more difficult when there is not a targeted area of focus. Finding advertisers is one of the most obvious examples of how not focusing on a specific niche can make your job harder. Advertisers want to reach a specific audience. If your Internet marketing efforts are highly specialized, you are much more likely to find an advertiser who has a target audience that closely matches your own target audience. When this happens advertisers see the benefit in collaborating with you. However, if your target audience is more diverse, advertisers may be hesitant to enter into a partnership with you because a portion of your audience may not be interested in their products or services. Therefore, they do not see the advantage to collaborating with you.

The example related to finding advertisers clearly illustrates the need to find a niche but there are other reasons why finding a niche is important. One such reason is it reduces workload such as the research efforts. Researching a very specific niche is much easier than attempting to do the same research for several different areas. If the niche you select is not broken down enough into a small enough component you may find yourself often doubling

and tripling your efforts in certain areas of your marketing strategy to reach your entire potential audience.

## Chapter 2 - Finding your Niche

To start out, we'd better lay down some quick ground rules for winning the niche game. Think of them as little mantras. Maybe write them down and tape them up somewhere where you'll look at them every day:

- 1. Marketing is psychology.**
- 2. It's not what you sell, but how you sell.**
- 3. Your best friend is authenticity.**
- 4. Your worst nightmare is to come off as a "phony" or a "poser".**

A wise saying I once heard goes "If your work is work, you're in the wrong line of work." Or, to put it in terms of a teacher who was a powerful mentor to me at a young age: "Do what you love, and the money will follow."

This especially applies to niche marketing. Working in niche markets applies the psychology of human nature on both the seller and buyer side. You're harnessing passion. Any old fool can go along with the mainstream and do what anybody else does, because that's, um, what everybody else is doing. But people occupying a niche experience something a little more special. To the buyer, the seller becomes more than a face-less entity behind a cash register; the seller becomes a part of "we". "We", the True Believers. We, the cult of fandom. We, the group that knows what's *really* going down!

For the seller, the daily grind of earning money suddenly vanishes and becomes instead a kind of quest. Frequently, the most successful sellers in a niche are part of the niche themselves. If you're participating in a market which also includes you, you get to feel very special. You're doing something

you believe in. You get to be more confident, because you have the advantage of special knowledge in your market.

Let's expand on those rules a bit - they're worth nailing down!

### **Marketing is psychology**

Tour the local restaurants in your area that specialize in an ethnic category of cuisine, and you'll see an ingrained trend: each restaurant is decorated in a style to look like part of the country it represents! Think how strange it would be to show up for a Chinese buffet and find the building is adobe with a red, white, and green color scheme, has pinatas hanging from the ceiling, and the staff is wearing panchos and sombreros. Turn it around and go to a Mexican restaurant; now, they don't have the building styled like a pagoda, Buddha statues and Foo dogs in the front, and the waitresses are geisha girls in white robes and wooden sandals.

Logically, this shouldn't matter! There's no real reason why the Chinese-decorated restaurant would be unable to produce the best tacos and burritos you've ever tasted. And why shouldn't I be able to decorate my restaurant in Mexican style and still be able to turn out perfect Chinese food? There shouldn't be any connection between my ability to make good chop suey and my idea to decorate the place like a Spanish ranchero. After all, customers come for the food, not the scenery. Ah, but we humans have all of our illogical human emotions tied up in our decision on what to buy and where. So if we want food of a particular ethnicity, we'll set our hopes on the establishment which wins the "cultural awareness" contest. We take that as a signal that that is the place which understands exactly what it is we want.

Human nature leads us to be the most likely to trust a person who shows an understanding of how we think. Every single one of us, given a choice of equally attractive options with all other factors being equal, will head for the person who demonstrates an understanding of us on the deepest level.

Thus, the other three rules follow from the first. Because marketing is psychology, niche marketing is based more on how you sell than what you sell. Because humans, everywhere, choose to do business with clients who "think like they do", the more authentic a member of that niche you are, the better you will do, and if you come off as a phony or a poser, you can kiss your business goodbye.

Now, let me back up here a bit. Just because you weren't born in a niche yourself doesn't mean that you will automatically be a failure in it. After all, you can sell toys to a five-year-old without being a child yourself. But the deck is stacked against you. At the best, you'll succeed in a niche with a lot of extra effort put into researching your market. You can also choose to adopt a niche. Throughout your life, you may be a part of several markets, and your views and tastes may change. But let's just make it clear that if you're marketing to a niche that repels you in every way, your success will not be impossible, but it will be very, very highly improbable.

Never forget that the person who is doing what they deeply believe in will have passion on their side. They will have more energy, work longer at it, attack problems with greater enthusiasm and more creative thinking, and will go to bed happy and rise the next morning looking forward to their work.

## **So, what's your niche?**

Everybody believes in something. Examine your background, your beliefs, your demographic. Note everything that you do. Include hobbies you like, TV shows you watch, music that you listen to. Everything that makes you - you! Don't worry so much about "But I'm weird! How am I going to make money catering to people in my tiny little group?" The Internet is here, and no matter how quirky you are, other people who think just like you do are only a few clicks away.

There are a number of ways to find a niche that works for you:

### *Be born in one.*

Obviously, if you're from India and have an interest in cuisine, you're all set up to start a curry business. You're an instant expert in whatever field you currently occupy. Being a member of a generation is another key. Clearly, if you remember the sixties, you have a good chance to be a hit with the Baby Boomers. Or maybe you're a member of Generation X - if so, you can talk to them with a voice that will ring true. Likewise for social and financial class.

### *Adopt one.*

All through our lives, we discover new things that interest us. Take any pastime that you pursue, concentrating on what is associated with that hobby or pursuit that you spend money on. But even better, imagine what you *could* buy, if only someone sold it. What better way to corner a market than to create one? So, if you already have a niche which nobody caters to the needs of, cater to it yourself! Others who were also looking for that business will find you.



### *Invent one*

Well, after all, look at all the niches that are around us. Each interest originated with one person who began to follow it. Somebody had to do it first. Think of the first person who put a "9/11 We Will Never Forget" sticker on their car. The first Seattle teenager to call their style "grunge". The first adult who posted pictures of their life-sized Lego models on the Internet. Every fad and "meme" started as an idea in just one person, who spread it around. In some cases, that person founds a lifestyle.

### *Stumble upon one*

Niches are waiting all around us to be discovered. A few stories (within my own 'computer geek' niche) to illustrate this point:

### **Some niches I've stumbled upon...**

Back in the 90's, I played with the "QBasic" programming language that came installed standard on the Microsoft Windows 3.1 operating system. I even saved a few floppies of little toy programs I'd done. A whole ten years later, I unearthed these relics from some basement box when I was moving, and, now having the Internet handy, decided to try searching for a modern day compiler for this language. Little did I expect that in fact, fans of QBasic were a vast crowd, with websites and clubs devoted to it.

On my techie blog, I mentioned the obscure computer role-playing game "Nethack", almost by accident. It's in a similar vein with Dungeons and Dragons, Blizzard's Diablo, etc., but it's about a thousand times as deep and incredibly difficult to win. Well, a few days later, the first of the search hits for this absolutely esoteric game began trickling in. From the search queries, I could tell that people were looking for help about how to solve problems

they'd encountered in some dungeon corner. The more I wrote about it, the more hits came in. Now, in the video game realm, Nethack will never be as popular as the Sims or Half Life. But since almost *nobody* publishes about that game, 100% of the search traffic based on it is coming my way. My site traffic may rise and fall, but the Nethack hits stay steady every single day.

I visited the site "textfiles.com", which is devoted to files left over from the old days of bulletin board systems, still known as BBSs. Yes, this is previous to the World Wide Web, in the late 80's and early 90's - back when you connected to another computer by dialing that computer's telephone number! And in the archives, I discovered a whole bunch of log-in screens rendered in ANSI art. *Nobody* in God's great Earth messes with ANSI character art anymore, and programs that can render it correctly are disappearing. So I decided to render some of it and save it in a modern-day image format. Here's three of the results to give you an idea:



At best, I thought these would be a curiosity. Turns out, my little gallery with about eighty of these BBS login screens became a brief Internet sensation. I got tons of comments, advice on rendering the format, and links from social bookmarking sites. People who were there during the BBS years rave about how it brings back the memories. I am now cited as an authority on the subject. I'm tempted to print them out and tour the country with a show.

### **Some others that I'm not directly interested in:**

Have you been to Disneyland and ridden on "the Haunted Mansion" ride? Well, you might be surprised to discover that there is a whole web culture devoted to the nerdiest kind of obsession with *just this one ride*. Notably, the "Ghost Relations Department", a blog on Blogspot.com, is one site covering everything that goes on at the ride - if they replace a sheet of wallpaper on that ride, this site reports it. Diagrams. Screen shots. Themed wallpaper. A fan base. It gets linked all the time from sites like Boing Boing. Just one ride!

Now, here's a good one: Have you ever heard of "glamourbombing"? I stumbled on this while tripping through Wikipedia idly one day. It turns out that a glamourbomb is a prank or act of mischief aimed at challenging or altering perceptions. In particular, it is intent on expanding the target's (i.e. a stranger) view of reality, with the hope of encouraging belief in magic, and/or magical beings such as fairies, nature spirits, etc. Yep, if you Google it, you'll discover that there is a culture called "Otherkin" doing this, who are to fantasy tales what Trekkies are to Star Trek. Minutes ago, you'd never heard of Otherkin, but now you might be thinking: an online store! Sell high fantasy novels by Piers Anthony, Terry Pratchett, and JK Rowling. Sell

supplies for glamourbombs such as glitter, feathers, magic props, sidewalk chalk. Start a club. Affiliate with the Renaissance lifestyle and a portion of the science fiction community. And of course, your site should sport a Javascript "Hobbit name generator". Sure, it's silly (I think it's ridiculous!), but it's a niche market waiting to happen! And if you happen to have just discovered this as the niche that you believe in, I was just kidding about saying it's ridiculous. Don't turn me into a newt for dissing your clan, OK?

### **What's the point of all this?**

Just to show that niche markets are everywhere, in places you'd never think to look. That is, in fact, why they're called niche markets! Sometimes they are obsessions, or hobbies, or fanatical followings of an art category or subculture. Movies that are known as "cult classics", lifestyles on the fringe, subcultures within cultures; they're all rich hunting grounds for the niche marketer. The difference between niche markets and the mainstream is that niche markets contain high concentrations of passionate followers. Marketing to them will translate into a passionate customer base.

Now that we've identified our potential niches, let's take some steps in putting that market to work for us...

### **Using the Internet to Find Your Niche**

The Internet is a wonderful place where users can find a great deal of information. However, many are not aware that the Internet is also where some savvy entrepreneurs can find lucrative business opportunities. Internet niche marketing is just one example of how those in the know can turn their hard work and dedication into profit. This is not to say that Internet

marketing is a simple field where anyone can prosper but there are opportunities for those how are willing to persevere in their efforts.

## Learning Internet Marketing Online

Believe it or not Internet niche market is a subject that can be learned online. It certainly helps for those who hope to prosper in this industry to have some knowledge of marketing and business before venturing in an Internet niche marketing campaign but it is not necessary. There is a great deal of information on organizing and executing a niche marketing campaign available online. This information may come in a number of different forms including websites offering informative articles, message boards focusing on the industry and ebooks which are available free of charge or for a fee.

Let's first examine learning about Internet marketing through websites. Type the search term, "Internet niche marketing" into your favorite search engine and you will likely receive millions of search results. Shifting through all of the search results would be rather time consuming and many of them would likely not be relevant. Fortunately the search engines do a great deal of work for you and the most useful websites will likely appear on the first couple of pages of search results. This still leaves you with a great deal of information to sort through but considering you are likely planning to turn niche marketing into a career this research is certainly worthwhile.

Carefully examine the search results you obtain from your search and bookmark the websites which seem most useful. Next take as much time as necessary to comb through all of these websites to find the most useful information. Take notes as you do to create a comprehensive resource for yourself. After this review your notes and investigate items which seem

unclear to your further. This research may include offline resources such as books or phone calls to experts in the industry.

## Search Engines are Your Friend

Now that you have already used the Internet to learn about the industry of Internet marketing, you probably know that finding a profitable niche is imperative. A niche is essentially a specific area of interest. Ideally you will already be an expert in this subject and it will be a subject which has a wide Internet audience without a great deal of existing websites focusing on this niche. Once again, you can turn to the Internet for finding this niche.

You may already have a few ideas for niches. These are probably subjects you are passionate about and understand very well. Examining statistical information provided by popular search engines regarding the popularity of search terms related to your niche will give you a good indication of whether or not Internet users are interested in your niche. If keywords related to your niche are searched on these search engines often, it is evident there is an audience for your niche. Next it is time to enter these keywords in a search engine and evaluate the websites which are provided as results for these keywords. If there are many strong results the niche can be considered saturated. In this case, it is a good idea to abandon the original idea and search for another niche. However, if there are not many high quality search results, you may have found your perfect niche.

## Chapter 3 - The Keys to your Niche Market

Now that we've had our starry-eyed idealism and brainstormed our niche market, it's time to dig in and do some grunt labor. We want to make sure that your website is the one getting the hits. Research will be your friend.

### One Caveat

The process of good SEO (Search Engine Optimization) applies here as well as for any other online pursuit. But there is less science to it than most people seem to think. The very, very best way to get hits for your topic is to (drumroll...) *make a good website*. Fill it with great content, set it up so the niche market you are targeting will think of your space on the web as their home, use the tools of the social web, and you cannot go wrong. Good keyword targeting will help you, but too many experts out there start composing derived equations and formulas and make it more scientific than it needs to be.

An old saying goes "Measure with a micrometer, mark with chalk, cut with an ax."; by all means, dump a keyword or two into your site's content. Do not waste time over agonizing whether your #6 most popular keyword phrase has a density of 4.7891% or a density of 4.788%. You will get far farther in life creating a site for people, with a nod to search engine tactics, than you will building exclusively by the SEO book and neglecting people. Remember rule #4 from the last chapter: today's web-savvy 21st century audience will spot a phony site from a mile away, and even if the search engine landed them to that page first, if they see nothing but "keyword soup" they'll leave immediately. And getting 50,000 hits per day when each

visitor stays for a maximum of 2.5 seconds is just as bad as getting no hits at all.

Another problem with SEO science is that search engines resent being gamed. Google, especially, will change its whole algorithm several times over the years, and there goes your precise formulas. Too much gaming may even get you blocked or banned.

So, with that thought firmly in mind, let's put on our Sherlock hat and become:

### **The Market Detective**

See it as a kind of role-playing game, where you'll be like a detective looking for clues. For the sake of having a concrete example, let's pick some niche interest at random - eenie meenie minnie moe - Star Trek. We'll pursue the trekkie market here. Note that Star Trek is such a popular phenomena that it doesn't really qualify as much of a niche market, but it will be a handy example.

Our first job is to find out everything associated with our topic. This will require some reading, and the usage of some quick tools. First, the quick, fun tools part:

If you don't have it already, create a special folder called "SEO" in your bookmarks system for whatever browser you use. Bookmark these tools:

<http://www.nichebotclassic.com/>

<http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion/>



These are keyword suggesters; enter your target topics to get common phrases and keywords related to the topic. Just running the name "Star Trek" through each of these gives me a list of phrases, which I can then save to a file. What you do with that data is up to you; you'll have to use whatever data-crunching method you like for your platform. I'm a hard-core Unix geek, so I'm more likely to write a Perl script and other geeky stuff. You can use a spreadsheet program, an online data tool, download or purchase an SEO analysis database, or what-have-you. Or just use your eyeballs! We won't have *that* much data to go through. A simple text file in Windows Notepad to take notes in will also suffice. Remember that some of the greatest detectives in the world used nothing but a simple pen and paper.

For my part, I just copy and pasted the results from the keyword-finders into a text file and ran a bunch of text filters on them to do things like screen out the phrase "star trek" and alphabetize, etc. Here's the list so far:

"11", "360 box legacy x", "animated", "armada", "armada 2", "art", "assault star tactical trek", "babes", "bones", "book", "borg", "bridge commander", "buy patches", "calendar", "cartoon", "cast", "character", "cheat code encounter ", "cheat encounter ", "cheat encounter ps2 ", "clothing", "collectible", "communicator", "compilation ", "computer game", "convention", "cook book", "costume", "date legacy release ", "deep space nine", "demo legacy ", "ds9", "dsn", "dvd", "encounter", "enterprise", "episode", "episode guide", "evil group ", "experience", "first contact", "free game", "game", "generation", "god man ", "hallmark ornament", "the motion picture", "the next generation dvd", "theme", "ii", "insurrection", "legacy", "legacy pc ", "model", "movie", "music", "nemesis", "new movie", "new voyage", "next generation

cast", "ng", "nude", "one season ", "online", "online game", "original",  
"original series", "ornament", "os", "pc game", "personality test",  
"phaser", "physics and ", "picture", "pictures", "porn", "poster", "prop",  
"remastered ", "ringtone", "savesaver", "series", "sex", "ship", "ship  
of the line", "shirt", "sound", "star war vs ", "starships", "the animated  
series", "the next generation", "tng", "toy", "uniform", "v show  
voyager", "video game", "voyager", "voyager dvd", "voyager  
wallpaper", "wallpaper", "woman", "xi"

Now, obviously, we're going to have to throw out a lot of garbage data, and we have to know what's garbage and what isn't. This goes back to our point in the last chapter, about picking a niche with which you are familiar. If you'd never heard of Star Trek, you'd have no way of knowing that '11' and 'xi' both refer to movie sequels, 'sex' and 'nude' are people looking for porn with a Star Trek theme and in fact Star Trek is a pretty prudish show. Then there's jargon: 'tng' stands for 'the next generation' - Picard's Enterprise as opposed to Kirk's - 'bones' is actually the character "Bones McCoy" from the original cast and not a skeleton reference, etc.

That's nice for me, since I know my subject pretty well already. But to really put results into context when we don't have much starting knowledge, we'll have to do some research. Now, for web research, Google is great. All hail the mighty Google. But here are some sites that will be even better for niche research:

**Wikipedia** ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page))

The free online encyclopedia. Ignore it at your peril; Wikipedia has become one of the best sites for information around. While academic circles might disparage it because it's free to the public, the community is mostly self-

policing and Wiki is at least as heavy an authority as you'll find anywhere else on the web.

**Clusty** (<http://clusty.com/>)

**Dogpile** (<http://www.dogpile.com/>)

Both of these are 'meta-search' engines, which scrape other web searches such as MSN and Yahoo as well as Google. Remember that one search engine will find what another neglects.

**Everything2** (<http://everything2.com/>)

Never heard of it? Well, you'll thank me for the tip. Everything2 is kind of halfway between another online encyclopedia and a community blog where writers practice their craft and rank each other on how well they write. The result is a potpourri of background and 'color' information. It is a treasury of quirky niche topics. When I can't find it anywhere else, I find it at Everything2. For instance, just from typing "Star Trek" into the Everything2 search, I not only got the main Star Trek node but links to the following other nodes at the bottom:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| The Star Trek Project                               | the BIG Star Trek node at Everything2                                      |
| Star Trek: The Next Generation                      | a series   |
| Q   | a character  |
| Star Trek Erotic Fan Fiction Clichés                | a humor piece on fan fiction (fan fiction is where the sex angle comes in) |
| Star Trek: Insurrection                             | a film   |
| Technology that gets lost between now and Star Trek | an analytical piece  |
| Star Trek: Voyager                                  | a series   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Dammit Jim, I'm a doctor not a bricklayer!   | a humorous reference to one of Bones McCoy's most frequent lines  |
| Highlights from Star Trek's "Starfleet Ship Design Manual" (chapter 7, "Designing the bridge") | a book  |
| Captain Kirk   | a character   |
| Never apply a Star Trek solution to a Babylon 5 problem  | a cliché  |
| Odd numbered Star Trek movies suck   | another cliché  |
| The Borg   | a breed of alien characters   |
| Star Trek ships use windows  | a humor piece   |
| Technobabble   | a factor; much critique of the show's scripting revolves around how much story time is eaten up yapping about technical terms |
| The Metanode Destruction Team  | IRRELEVANT - somebody at Everything2 is targeting this node. It'll never happen.  |
| Scotty   | a character   |
| Marina Sirtis  | an actress playing a character on the show who has a wide fan following all her own   |
| Auguste Piccard  | a character   |
| Star Trek: The Animated Series   | a series  |
| Jeri Ryan  | an actress on the show  |
| The Physics of Star Trek   | an analytical piece   |
| Babylon 5  | a related show - another science fiction series that sometimes shares a fan base  |

|                                  |               |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| If Dr. Seuss wrote for Star Trek | a humor piece |
|----------------------------------|---------------|

**Squidoo** (<http://www.squidoo.com/browse/homepage>)

**the Straight Dope** (<http://www.straightdope.com/>)

**Ezine Articles** (<http://www.ezinearticles.com/>)

Some extra 'hot spots' for out-of-the-way research. Squidoo is another community-based article site, which groups links and articles into 'lenses' that focus on a given topic. The Straight Dope is Cecil Adams' popular newspaper column delivered online, with a searchable archive of unusual content. Ezine Articles is a huge, searchable archive of free articles - one of the better out of many!

Like I said, Google is great, but when you really want to dig deep into a niche, you want to search the "deep web". While Star Trek might be well-known to Google, were my niche topic something really esoteric I might find nothing on Google at all.

One more thing: If you use either Internet Explorer or Firefox, there is a research tool called "**Stumble Upon**": (<http://www.stumbleupon.com/>) which you can install on your browser. This is a gem! Imagine if you could take Google's search results and submit it to a panel of experts who screened out the worthless sites and handed you back the highest quality links - and then search it just like you search Google. That's essentially what Stumble Upon is. Indispensable!

## Getting a handle on the data:

Now that we've 'read up' and applied some research, we have a better grasp of how to use those keywords. For example, here's a partial list of the Star Trek search terms, sorted into categories:

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| series and movies  | animated cartoon, deep space nine (ds9, nemesis, original series, voyager, the next generation (tng)   |
| franchise products | 360 Xbox, art, babes, book, patches, calendar, cheat code, clothing, collectible, computer game, cook book, hallmark ornament, video game, shirt, sound, free game |
| associated terms   | armada, Bones, Borg, cast, character, starships, phaser, physics   |

Now, "series and movies" applies only because our niche topic is a fiction genre. "Franchise products" will be things that give us ideas for either products we can offer, or products for which we can advertise. "Associated terms" can be lumped in with "series and movies" in the general category of "things we should put in our content" if we make a page about Star Trek, but we'll also separate them because people will search for a DVD boxed set of "Star Trek: Voyager" but maybe only desktop wallpaper of the "Borg".

With nothing more than a few hours' of web study, we already have dozens of strategies suggesting themselves. You could do a blog about Star Trek, follow conventions and list schedules, critique the series, publish movie

reviews, post pictures of the popular characters, print up T-shirts, calendars, and patches, put up a banner ad from Amazon.com selling the films and books, publish biographies of the cast and writers, make interactive toys such as a Javascript trivia quiz or a "say it, Bones" Flash app where a picture of Bones McCoy has a speech balloon saying whatever the visitors type in...

## **Conclusion**

This example has only been useful in illustrating the steps to researching a niche topic, but even at that it came through pretty handy. You can apply these same methods to whatever your niche topic might be. Dig up keywords, sort them, scour the Internet for information to add relevance to the keywords, and do some preliminary sorting. And just like that, the first gleam of a business model will present itself.

And if you dive ahead to the next chapter, you'll be just in time to catch us translating that business model into a potential for profit...

## The Importance of Search Engine Optimization in Internet Niche Marketing

The importance of search engine optimization (SEO) cannot be overlooked in the Internet niche marketing industry. This is because SEO is one of the most crucial elements of any successful Internet niche marketing strategy. This section of this ebook will examine how SEO can increase traffic to a niche website and will discuss some of the strategies which can be used to optimize a website for particular keywords.

## Increased Traffic through Search Engine Optimization

SEO is critical to the success of any Internet niche marketing campaign because it is one of the best ways website owners can increase traffic to their website. Search engines are used regularly by Internet users who are looking for more information on a particular subject. Internet users enter keywords to these niche subjects and visit the websites which rank well on the search engines. The Internet is a fast paced research tools and those who use the Internet expect results quickly. Your niche website may be filled with quality content, useful resources and helpful advice but if you do not optimize your website properly you may not receive the traffic your website warrants. If your website isn't on the first or second page of search results it is unlikely many users will even see the link to your website.

In light of the propensity of Internet users to visit websites with high ranking search results it stands to reason that optimizing a website is absolutely necessary. Owners of niche websites who are successful recognize this fact and make concerted efforts to achieve high search engine rankings.

### Using Keywords to Optimize a Niche Website

The Internet is driven by content and in this content driven world, savvy use of keywords is critical. Websites are typically designed for particular keywords. These keywords are words or phrases which Internet users will think of when they are looking for more information on products or services offered by the niche website.

Keyword density is one of the components which is often used to optimize a website. Keyword density refers to the number of times a particular word or phrase is used in relation to the total number of words in the article. This ratio is usually expressed as a percentage. Although there is no set keyword



density that is guaranteed to produce optimal results but many successful Internet marketing strategies utilize keyword densities ranging from 2%-7%.

### Using Inbound Links to Optimize a Niche Website

Inbound links are another tool Internet marketers can use to optimize their website for search engines. Inbound links are links from one website which refer visitors to the niche website. Search engines place value on these links because they are essentially one website vouching for the validity of another website. The ideal situation for an inbound link is from a website which complements the original website without being in direct competition with the website. An example of this may be a link to a resume writing service placed on the website for a corporate recruiter.

### How Images Can Contribute to Search Engine Optimization

Images can also contribute to the search engine rankings of a website. This is one fact which is not commonly known by those who only casually dabble in the world of SEO. However, those who are savvy realize images, although not visible to search engines, can still contribute to a successful SEO campaign for a niche website. While images themselves are not visible to search engines, ALT tags are visible to search engines. It is through these ALT tags that website owners can allow their images to contribute to their search engine rankings. ALT tags are pieces of HTML code which describe the image. These tags are often visible to the website visitor when they move their mouse over the image. The text contained within the ALT tag may become visible at this time but otherwise visitors would be unaware they are even implemented.

## Chapter 4 - Finding the Money in a Niche Topic

Well, the money *is* what we're in it for, although hopefully if you've followed my advice of picking a niche which is appealing to you, you will be in it for the fun as well. Now, the lesson we should know is that *any* niche has a profit potential. Thanks to our capitalist system and the instant gratification of the Internet, consumers have the opportunity to indulge themselves tremendously. Let's recall some wacky, off-the-wall ideas from the recent past that *shouldn't* have made money - but did:



### **The Flying Spaghetti Monster**

The meme that roared. This is nothing but a joke aimed at making fun of organized religion. The mock "deity" now has his own franchise, with T-shirts, bumper stickers, video games, and all sorts of products. An example of a *niche character*.



### **Pogs**

Remember these from the 80's? These were nothing more than plastic tokens with designs on them, and a little sidewalk game similar to marbles. Kids started playing, collecting, and trading. An example of a *niche fad* - which, by the way, is a nostalgic topic about now



and is probably ripe for a comeback.

### **Origami**

The Japanese art form of paper-folding would seem tough to market after you've sold everybody enough paper. But instead, like other minor hobbies such as needlepoint or soap-carving, its profit potential can be exploited by trading diagrams, instructions, and ideas for new models. There is software you can buy which works as a desktop "folding lab" for instance, for creating new shapes. An example of a *niche hobby*.



### **Firefox**

The famous free web browser, of course! How on Earth can you make money giving your product away for free? Simply code a Google search box into the browser itself, and Google pays you for the promotion. Firefox now has a market share of over 25% - and it's still climbing! Firefox is the modern incarnation of what used to be a doomed browser, name of Netscape, but it's now so hot that Google AdSense has a deal where you can place a "get

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | Firefox" button on your web page and collect one dollar for each customer you send them - blowing away most Adsense keywords for profit! An example of an <i>advertising-supported free niche product</i> . |
|--|---|

Recall the car example from the first chapter - where I talked about selling Fords or Toyotas. Even though you've chosen the niche market of Toyotas when everybody else is selling Chevys, your methods for marketing the product will still be the same. You'll still display the cars on a lot, offer test drives, price competitively, and so on.

Of course, your imagination and creativity will be your best asset. Maybe you'll be able to follow the example of others in mining a niche for riches, but after all, you weren't interested in niche marketing because you like to follow the crowd, were you? No, you're in it because you're confident that you can come up with your own way - maybe even be a little bit crazy and original and let the crowd follow you for a change!

That being said, we're going to investigate the profitability of our potential niche, using very standard methods. If you come up with your own brilliantly original idea, that's more power to you - but I can't quantify that process. What I can quantify is the standard channels for finding profit potential.

## **The Thrill of the Hunt**

Back in Chapter 2, I mentioned some niches I'd stumbled upon. Recall my experience with Nethack and ANSI art. I'll be up front with you - there's almost no way you're going to get rich off of either of those topics. The best you can hope for with these two topics is to make a buck on click-throughs for your ads. In my example, I run a "geek" site. The extreme fringe elements are only getting a tiny slice of my site. It's only when I knit together interest in a bunch of little topics under the general category of "geek interests" that I get decent traffic. In any case, my point was that these were niches that I'd stumbled upon - not ones that I'd made money on by themselves!

Lots of sites do this. Two sites focused on the collective presentation of niche subjects is [boingboing.net](http://boingboing.net) and [damninteresting.com](http://damninteresting.com). These are kind of intellectual playgrounds and galleries of curios. You might think that knitting niches together is a small deal, but if you've ever made the front page of Boing Boing you'll know that that's one powerful traffic hose directed at your site for a glorious week.

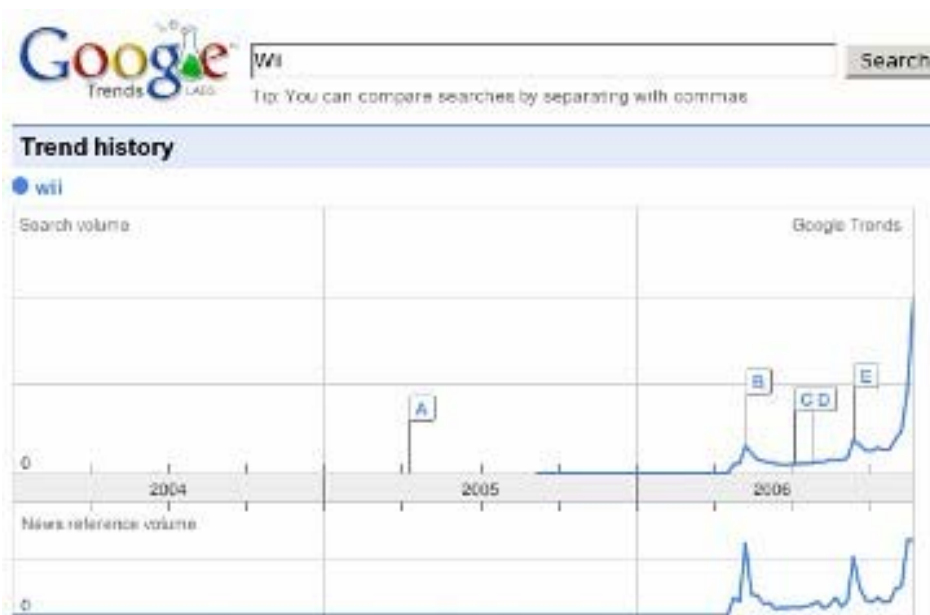
So what are we looking for? A high-demand market with little competition. Ha ha, yes, that's the ideal - and what a silly thing to insist on! Of course, you might be smart - but there just aren't enough fools in the world to ensure that you'll continually find vast areas of the market going untapped. If there's *that* much money to be made from it, somebody has usually thought of a way to get at it.

Anyway, we'll set our sites on a high-demand market with little competition - but realistically we'll understand that at best, a niche market is a small thing. Many niche markets strung together will potentially equal a bonanza. Occasionally, if you stay on top of the information out there, you might get into a niche market just at the time when interest in it is surging. Think of the first lucky website to start promoting the iPod, for instance. Or look at YouTube - two years ago, the site was unheard of. Upload videos and trade comments on them. Then two years later, Google buys it for a crazy \$1.65 billion sum! Whoa, wouldn't we all like to be YouTube?

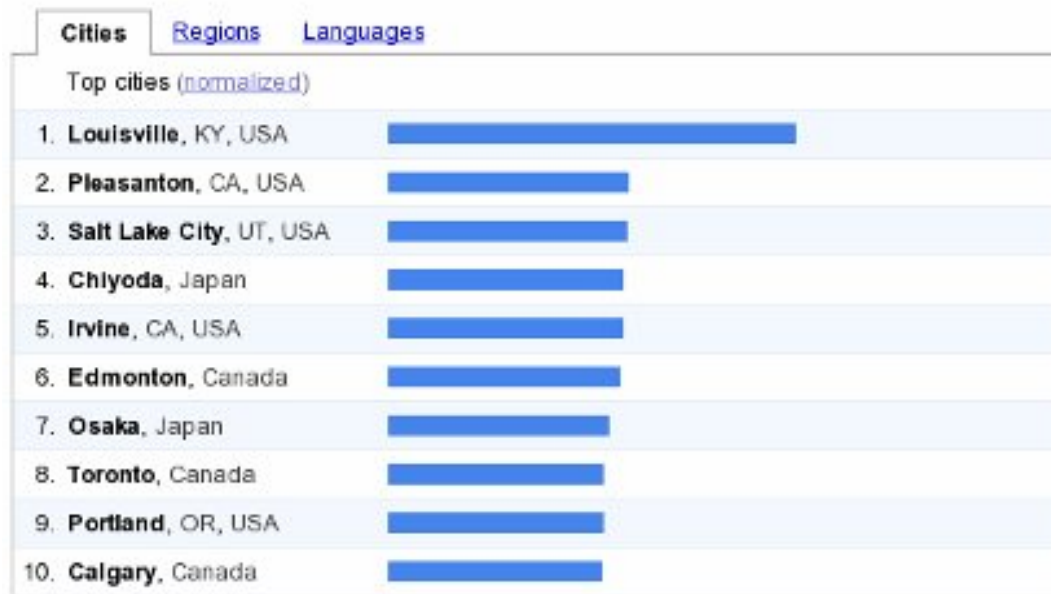
We'll keep our hopes up and head back to the drawing board. Here are some easy research tools to use online for evaluating a potential profit area:

### **Google Trends** (<http://www.google.com/trends>)

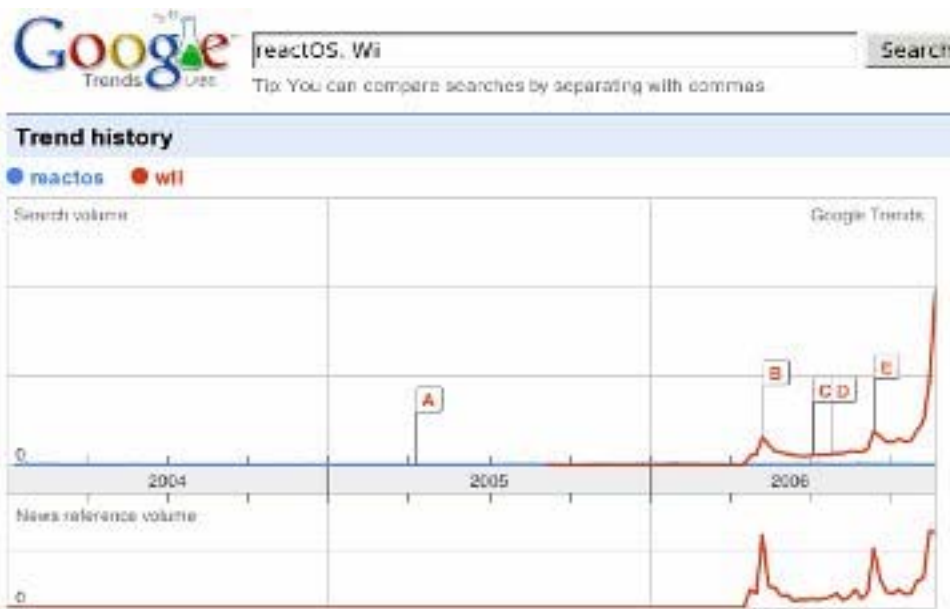
The number one place to go to assess the popularity of a keyword, in terms of search engine traffic. Here, for instance, is a screenshot of my search for the Nintendo Wii:



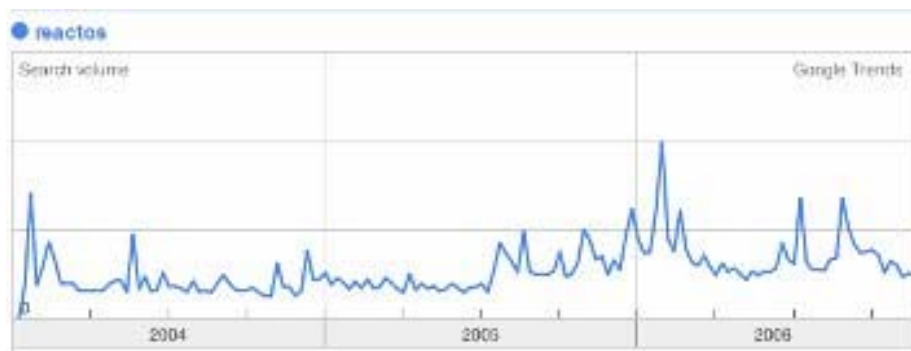
Obviously, as of December 2006, interest in the Wii is just taking off. This is actually an example of what used to be a niche market which is suddenly a very mainstream market. But note that there's much room to expand - look at how the line sweeps off heading for the sky. Below is another shot, showing the top ten cities that searched for the Wii.



Wow, most of the market's in the USA and Canada, some of it in Japan (Nintendo's home country!). Now, from the hugely popular Wii to a topic that's apparently not just niche, but stinking small: the ReactOS operating system.

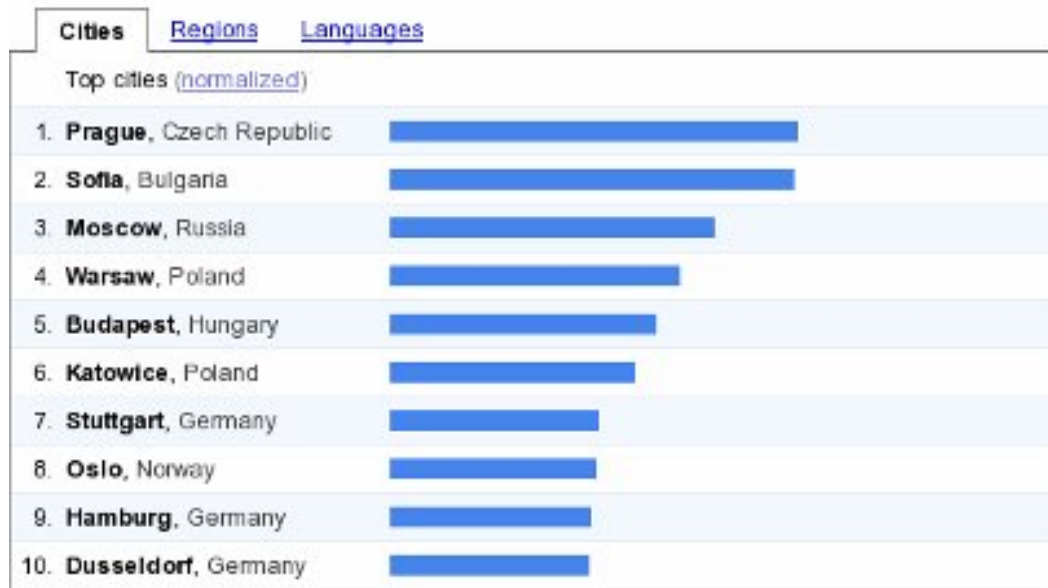


Note that you can search for two terms at once. We see interest scraping bottom compared to the Wii. I've done that deliberately, so we aren't misled by what the graph looks like when we search for the term by itself:



See, Google doesn't show numbers on the chart - the only way to get an idea for scale is compare the two. Now, we do see some tiny interest in ReactOS. Who are these people?





Well, there you have it. ReactOS, you see, is a free software operating system being designed from the ground up to be as close to Microsoft Windows as possible. It's still in development. And yes, they're keeping it legal. Never heard of it? Well, you must be a native English-speaker! There is much more resentment against Microsoft in non-American countries - I'm sure you're heard of the European Union's actions against Microsoft's practices, for instance.

I did this to demonstrate one way of finding a niche market with profit potential: by regional interest. A topic will be dead in one country but live and kicking somewhere else. Consider the topic of Vegemite - unheard of in the USA, but an absolute craze over in Australia.

## Search Engine Watch

(<http://searchenginewatch.com/showPage.html?page=2156041>)

The link I have here is to a post on Search Engine Watch - itself a staple of the SEO study - that lists links to the "buzz indexes" - listing the top topics

being searched for through each respective search engine. Here's just one of these, the Yahoo Buzz Log:

**the buzz log** What the world is searching for... [+ MY Y!](#) [RSS](#)

## Your Cheating Heart

By Erik Gundter  
Wed, December 27, 2006, 3:30 am PST

With all the spanking new [consoles](#) unwrapped this holiday season, there are loads of new games frustrating gamers all over the world. When you can't unlock that weapon, level, or song, where do you turn? Well, searches show you run straight for the Search box in hopes of [cheating](#) your way to the top.

On the day after Christmas, searches on "[guitar hero 2 cheats](#)" (+184%), "[tony hawk project 8 cheats](#)" (+182%), and "[lego star wars 2 cheats](#)" (+101%) all showed triple digit percentage increases. For a look at the most cheated-on games, we turned to the data to present a list of the top 20 cheat searches...

- [Runescape Cheats](#)
- [GTA San Andreas Cheats](#)
- [Sims 2 Cheats](#)
- [Need For Speed Carbon Cheats](#)
- [Guitar Hero 2 Cheats](#)
- [Pokemon Emerald Cheats](#)
- [Adventure Quest Cheats](#)
- [Scarface Cheats](#)
- [Gears of War Cheats](#)
- [Final Fantasy 12 Cheats](#)

- [GTA Vice City Cheats](#)
- [Dragon Fable Cheats](#)
- [Need For Speed Most Wanted Cheats](#)
- [The Sims Cheats](#)
- [Halo 2 Cheats](#)
- [Pokemon Crater Cheats](#)
- [Madden 07 Cheats](#)
- [Bully Cheats](#)
- [Warcraft 3 Cheats](#)
- [Saints Row Cheats](#)

Filed under: [Video Games](#), [Cheats](#)

[Comments \(0\)](#) • [Email this posting](#)

**top movers**

| Overall                     | Rank | Subject                         | 1-Day Move |
|-----------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------------|
| <a href="#">Actins</a>      | 1    | <a href="#">James Brown</a>     | 26087%     |
| <a href="#">Movies</a>      | 2    | <a href="#">Prince Charles</a>  | 1577%      |
| <a href="#">Music</a>       | 3    | <a href="#">Karl Byron</a>      | 1279%      |
| <a href="#">Sports</a>      | 4    | <a href="#">Dreidel</a>         | 1215%      |
| <a href="#">TV</a>          | 5    | <a href="#">Chuck Berry</a>     | 1190%      |
| <a href="#">Video Games</a> | 6    | <a href="#">Nick Joeger</a>     | 1115%      |
|                             | 7    | <a href="#">Deal Or No Deal</a> | 812%       |
|                             | 8    | <a href="#">Marilyn Hanner</a>  | 542%       |
|                             | 9    | <a href="#">Tony Romo</a>       | 501%       |
|                             | 10   | <a href="#">Kelly Hu</a>        | 462%       |

[More »](#)

YAHOO! SEARCH

**TOP SEARCHES OF 2006**

SEE WHAT THE WORLD SEARCHED FOR

I like Buzzlog because unlike Google Zeitgeist or AOL Hot Searches, Yahoo Buzzlog aims at spotting niche trends. Here, it is grouping together a whole category of searches - video game cheats - on the day after Christmas. Now, video games by themselves aren't even a niche market. Searching for cheats is also pretty popular on it's own. But we could pick through these and make a site with a genre of games, not just cheat codes, but with plenty of "link bait" for people to find. The rest of the year, video game cheats might not be a blip on the radar, but right after Christmas people are obviously looking for cheat codes to exploit in the new games they just got (not very sporting of them, is it? only had it one day and you want to cheat? but anyway...).

So, I did this to show two other ways to spot a niche with profit potential: by seasonal variation and by a specific niche within a broad area. For instance, one of the games "Sims 2" is the astoundingly popular Sims video game. There is a whole cottage industry composed of making custom objects for Maxis' 3D life simulator. Even though the Sims series has been out for years and market saturation for selling the game titles themselves has been reached, interest in this game will continue for many more years due to its infinite replay value and the way you can go on modifying it forever. There's that long tail again!

Finally, it's well worth the (FREE) price of maintaining a blog at places such as Blogger.com to use as a "fishing hole". Get a free hit counter which tracks incoming searches and slap it into the blog. Now try writing a brief post on a niche topic. Check back in a few days: did your little low-ranking blog get an influx of, say, 50 extra hits in one day coming in looking for that topic? This is a sign of two great things: there is at least some interest in the topic and low competition for it. If there were no interest, you'd get no hits. If there were too much competition, you'd get no hits either, because some other sharpie has already opened up a huge site SEO optimized to the max to get all the hits.

### **Reality Check**

We don't just make up a new specialty and sit smug. The other half of the equation is *money*. So, we need an area that has *all three characteristics*:

5. Low Supply: very few people have thought of doing business here, which is why it's a niche.

6. High Demand: Of course, not too high or we're dreaming in the clouds. But it won't do us any good if nobody, anywhere on the planet, cares about it. If the interest is zero, it isn't a niche, it's a vacuum.
7. Profit potential: You have to be sure that there is some way to make money off of it.

To find low supply, use the search engines to look for your term and some of the top phrases and keywords associated with that term. Look for low hit counts.

To find high demand, use the search engine watches and buzz indexes to find topics with a high degree of interest.

To find profit potential, look for businesses already on the web doing business in that niche. Or think of a separate niche which has business models you could easily adapt. Last, you can do like the pioneers I showed you at the beginning of this chapter did and come up with your own brilliant business plan out of almost nothing. It's a long shot, but worth mentioning.

Don't let it break your heart if you find a few more competitors than you'd hoped for. There might be room for one more seller.

Don't be crestfallen if the demand is lower than you'd hoped. You can always hype the daylights out of your product - you can create new interest where none existed before. If you're American or British, you might never have heard of Vegemite - but now that I've brought it up, and you've searched Google trends about it, you're at least a little curious to try it, right? How wrong could 20 million Australians be?

As for actual methods of turning the interest into profit, that's a little easier. Even if the products of the niche itself have no wealth potential, interest in it can be turned into money anyway. We're going to look at the actual idea of either being ad-supported with content about the niche or creating a product within the niche in the next chapter.

## Chapter 5 - Deciding your Profit Model

Once you've latched onto a niche market or three, the rest is pretty basic business. Which is a good thing, because there's one other thing about new niche markets that I must point out: you have to act *quickly*! Delaying for months while you set up your strategy is inviting somebody else to swoop in and establish themselves in the niche that should have been yours.

In fact, you might want to keep a sort of "emergency action kit" for acting quickly to establish a skeleton site while you figure out the other details.

This would be something like:

8. Either a few parked domains or capitol to buy up domain names quickly.
9. A web host in mind to use. It also doesn't hurt to have a free base or two such as a site on Blogger or MySpace which you can quickly optimize for your new niche.
10. A website template that's "ready to go". Remember, all we're worried about is dropping in a placeholder, so no need for anything fancy yet.

But that's a side note. The real work here is deciding how you're going to turn the potential profit into cash. There are just two ways to make money on the Internet: selling a product or having affiliate ads to others who are selling a product. If you go with a product, you will need less content and more focus on using the website as an online store front from which to offer your product. If you go with an ad-supported site, you will need to focus entirely on content - and you'd better make it good!

## **The Product Model**

We'll cover this one first. Remember that you do not need to be a manufacturer of tangible objects in order to have a product. Your product can be services, information, memberships in a group, or ebooks and newsletter subscriptions. You can use CafePress (<http://www.cafepress.com/>) or another online service to print up T-shirts, coffee mugs, bumper stickers, and other promotional materials associated with your niche. Here's a few niche areas and the ideas I might look at to create a salable product:

### *Coin Collecting*

- An auction site service - charge membership or percentage of sales, let members join and auction to buy and sell coins and currency through your site.
- An ebook series - this is one area which is starving for information. Coin collectors are always hungry for the facts on the active market and the best grading, cleaning, caring-for, and markets for coins. You could publish a whole library on the history of US coins alone.
- A newsletter subscription - track events and conventions in the numismatic world, post bids, have articles for coin topics.
- Promotional materials - never hurts to get some designs on some T-shirts. But how better would be a wall poster with images and description of a class of coins?

### *Manga*

Manga is a form of Japanese comic or graphic novel, similar to the Anime movie genre. It is one burning-hot market right now in America. You can hardly set foot in a bookstore housed in an indoor mall without finding a manga rack.

- Hello, we're talking collectors here, so once again an auction site for members to buy, sell, and trade manga books suggests itself. Remember also that there are a lot of artists interested in creating manga in America - Google for the phrase "how to draw manga" to see what I mean. Now, how about a membership board where artists, illustrators, publishers, and writers can all get together and collaborate, hire each other, etc.?
- Maybe not ebooks, but maybe some video tutorials on drawing manga, a magazine of articles on the manga market, and so on.
- Promotional materials! Your main target is young people, so T-shirts, posters, stickers, and anything else you can paste a comic book character on is absolutely mandatory.

### *Reptiles*

Reptiles as pets, naturally. It's a niche, but a strong one; get used to some competition - a small, almost negligible amount.

- ebooks, newsletters, and video tutorials on the care of exotic pets. The market is sparse on this topic - I've owned the odd snake and lizard in my time, and there's nowhere near the information on them like there is for more mainstream pets.
- Promotional materials - even for the really niche pets, a visit to PetSmart will show that there is no Komodo dragon or chameleon that hasn't had everything from calendars to pens with its image on it. Pet owners love to announce their fondness for a species. Check out an office some time and notice that you can hardly miss the cubicle belonging to the pet fancier!

One big point we must make, here: you do not need to be your own writer, artist, web designer, or anything else to create these products. You can



instead go to any of the many online freelancer sites on the Internet and hire writers, artists, designers, and so forth by the job or for a steady stream of work. We'll cover some more of this in detail in later chapters. But now that I've pointed that out, you might even think of hiring a programmer to design software affiliated with a niche. Maybe a game themed around the niche (good idea for manga!), or a useful tool such as a database for record-keeping (coin collectors spend a lot of time sorting and categorizing their pieces!).

In fact, the model of being the webmaster and hiring online freelancers to do the grunt labor is about the most common way that the Internet does business, at least as far as the Internet entrepreneur is concerned. The cycle is usually: the webmaster buys up sites, researches topics for business models on these sites, then parcels out the work to freelancers and puts that work on the site, then leaves the site to grind out money by itself while they move on to the next site. This goes with the idea of having many niche topics adding their steady percentage together into your bottom line. And business brains and creative brains are seldom strong in the same person. Creative people tend to have gobs of talent, but little idea how to sell it. Business people have the sales savvy to know what to sell and how, but lack the creative talent to make it happen. This isn't always the case, but it's how it works out more often than not.

### **The Content Model**

This is the classic website supported by advertising. "Content is king" is a well-worn saying on the Internet, with much truth behind it. Always remember that the Internet is a *media*, just like TV and radio. Content can come in many forms:

1. Text - blog posts, articles, databases, tables, references, and all.
2. Images - Can be offered as a product as well. Remember in Chapter 3 where we explored the Star Trek fan base; lots of people searching for wallpaper and images.
3. Video and audio - either of Flash animations, video formats. Audio files can either be a podcast - a kind of live audio recording posted as a blog - or a product also, such as cell phone ring tones.
4. User-generated content - sometimes the big attraction is the other visitors, who, given the opportunity to do so, will be more than happy to provide you with content, by way of chat rooms, bulletin boards, blog comments, and so on. Check out Slashdot and Digg - the whole thing is nothing but user-generated content.

Mainly, however, we have a reason to focus on plain old text: search engines can't index anything else (beyond titles, of course)! We're all looking forward to the day when we can Google for a sound bite from an hour-long video, but until that technology comes to us, we'll have to work up our keywords and text content to pull in the search traffic.

Here again, you can outsource and delegate to hired freelancers. We'll explore the content model in depth as well in a later chapter. In fact, we'll explore the whole method of putting the social web to work for you in getting links and building traffic. But I'll whisper one more word to you one more time: blogs!

### **Mix and Match**

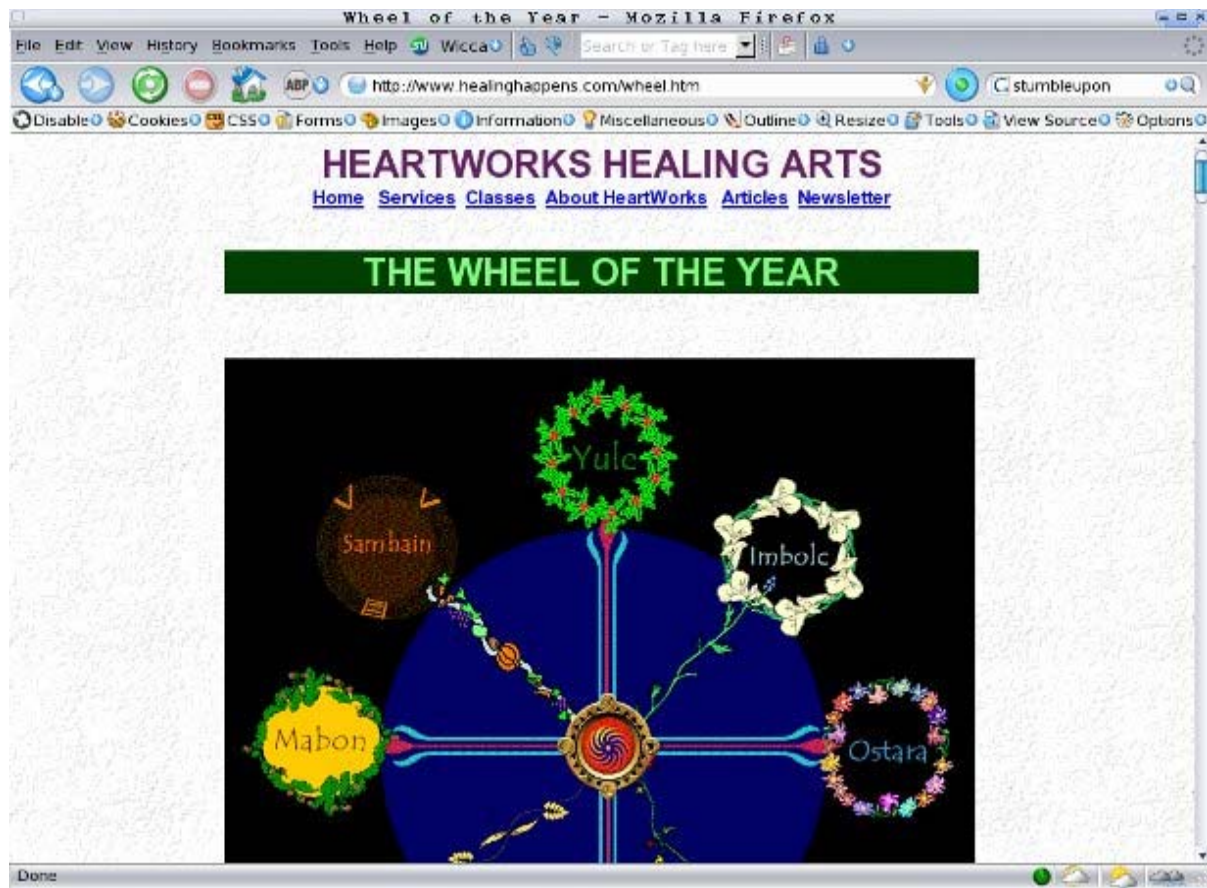
If you have a hard line drawn between the product model and the content model, you should change it to a fuzzy line instead. There's no reason at all

why your site can't have partial content, ads, and products all in one. In fact, since you're playing to the niche market, let's think about that.

Say your interest is in the Renaissance lifestyle (SCA - the Society for Creative Anachronism, is a good place to start if you don't know what I'm talking about). You go to local Renaissance Faires and Festivals, you have friends in it, you're interested in history, you may dress up in costume at events and gatherings, and you may even go for Medieval crafts and hobbies such as woodwork, juggling, acting, alchemy, astrology, and so on. Now, you're a walking niche market looking for a place to happen. As long as you found this great site devoted to your niche (after scouring the depths of the Internet), you'd be all the happier if it was a one-stop for all your needs, right?

So you can cater to a "full-service" aspect. Articles and a blog on the topic, ads on the blog, links to buy T-shirts with logos appealing to the interest, offer an eBook or two related to the topic, offer some free wallpaper or a Flash game related to it, put up and moderate a discussion board for fans of the topic (and eventually fans *of your site!*) to meet and mingle. You'll get the idea.

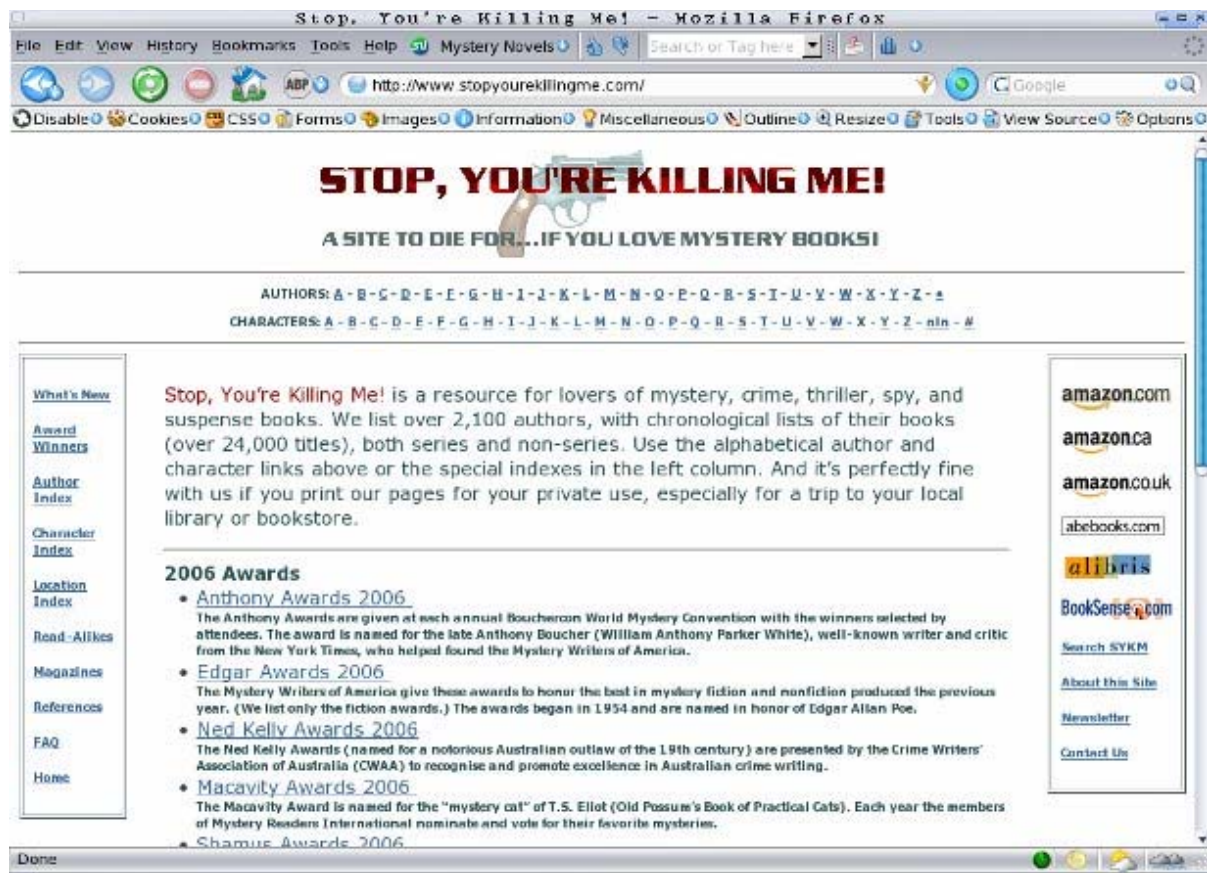
Let's take a look at some niche-focused sites out there to get some ideas for potential business models. Anybody else would be sitting here saying "How do we tell Google to find me niche sites?", but you and I, having gotten this far in the book, know about StumbleUpon (<http://www.stumbleupon.com/>) which I mentioned earlier, and which is a tool no niche market researcher should be without. With the Stumble-Upon toolbar in place, I simply pick a category and go, stopping when I find something interesting:



A Wiccan site's front page. Wicca is a religion related to Paganism and Druidism (or kind of in that category?). The wheel links to articles on the seasons (content!), and the links at the top offer services, classes, and a newsletter (products!).



Urban exploration, "draining", or sometimes "vadding" - a hobby aimed at exploring manmade structures where very few tread, such as storm drains, office building rooftops, and other adventurous locales. This site sports lots of content, but also a book titled "Access all Areas" for \$20.



A site focused on the mystery novel genre. One need only enter a public library to tell two things about the mystery novel market: (1) every library has some mystery novels, and (2) they're always specially-labeled and shelved in a tiny section all their own. Textbook example of a niche market. We don't need to be a winning Jeopardy contestant to see how they make their money - Amazon ads are right there in the sidebar! And notice the lack of paid products - but the abundance of content, such that an alphabetized index is necessary. So obviously, we have a content-focused site. I bet they clean up!

One more thing while I'm here - that title and logo is gold! "Stop, you're killing me!" has just the right inflection of niche identification, with a revolver model right out of a Film Noir. This is the kind of thing that lets the Alfred Hitchcock fan know right away that they've found a site which

understands their topic from the roots up. And I dare you to forget the name of the site once you've been there!

OK, we've laid out the basic models for turning niche interest into market dollars. In addition, if you, yourself, have interest in the niche topic, you might have experience in it which you can sell. You can consult, sell your specialized services, create your own product - the possibilities are endless there, but you'll be on your own.

We'll next examine in depth the content/advertising model. Because if there's any area people need help in, it is there!

## Chapter 6 - The Niche Content Site

Probably the most common method of a professional website is to have content plus targeted ads. Sounds simple, doesn't it? Well, it may well be simple, but browsing online long enough will reveal some sites that, in a word, are hideous. Just because it saves me a lot of time by having some ground covered already, you should go to:

*Vincent Flanders' Web Pages That Suck*

<http://www.webpagesthatsuck.com/>

Mr. Flanders has been working in the web design field for nearly a decade now, and has several books published. This site is an excellent education in what *not* to do, with examples pointing out offenders and plenty of reasons why. Mind you, this is just the basic, Common Sense 101 kind of stuff. Avoid these beginner mistakes. And beyond that, there are enough more mistakes out there *not* covered by Flanders to be enough to fill a whole *other* site.

We aren't just making a fuss about this because of our sense of artistic taste. There's nothing wrong with putting together a page composed of little more than plain old text, with no graphic decoration at all. Craigslist is an excellent example of this. No, the reason design is important is because for your content site to make money, you want:

11. ...Links to come to your site.
12. ...Visitors to be able to find what they came here for.
13. ...For them to be able to see the ads.
14. ...For them to feel comfortable clicking on the ads and visiting the advertised sites.



## **The Difference between 'White Hat SEO' and 'Black Hat SEO'**

Now try this: search for a common high-volume phrase (I picked "college scholarships") and on the results page, click the link at the bottom to take you farther and farther back in the search results. We're looking for the real stinkers, the pages that ranked #800 or so. It won't be long before you find a site that goes something like:

"This page is all about college scholarships. You can find out everything you need to know about college scholarships. Our college scholarships resource is here to help those of you seeking information about college scholarships to find college scholarships. There are many things to know about college scholarships. One thing is that many people are seeking information about college scholarships. Another thing is that pages like this are here to help you find out everything you need to know about college scholarships..."

...and on and on, filling a page with 600-800 of the most worthless words known to all humanity, with ads along the side. Hint: This doesn't work! Search engines have been around long enough now that everybody knows a gamed site when they see one. The search engine knows and blocks, bans, or cripples your site with a low page ranking. Even for that week between your putting the page up and Google canning it, any visitors you do happen to get will leave immediately, and probably complain to somebody about it, too.

And yet you still see hairy keyword formulas out there for "guaranteed 500,000 hits per day!" The same goes for link farming (having a whole bunch of sites linking to each other), "meta-tag voodoo" (putting a bunch of

deceptive text into the page's meta tags to try to fool the search engines), and scams, schemes, formulas, methods, and dirty tricks of every kind. For all of this, you should remember that this is exactly the same as the people who go into Las Vegas thinking they have a system to cheat at the roulette tables: the casinos have seen *every single trick* before. The same is true with search engines.

All of these methods taken together are known as "Black Hat SEO", optimizing a page for search engines in a dishonest or deceitful manner. Opposed to this, there is "White Hat SEO", where we go about creating our site for people first, with a nod towards search engines on the side.

Here again, covering this area in detail is beyond the scope of this chapter. I'll summarize the key points for you, but in the meantime here's a site with good information:

*Performancing*

(<http://performancing.com/node/3422>)

This post is a good introduction to the field. Performancing is an established, credible expert site.

Unfortunately, there is so much misinformation in this field that I have to waste half a chapter debunking all the mythology out there before I can tell you what to do. So, let's get down to the business part:

## **Content**

Three categories of content:

1. Blogs
2. Articles

3. Visitor-driven content (bulletin boards, community blogs, etc.)
4. Salesletters (for supporting content to sell a product)

We will deal with salesletters in a later chapter covering selling a product.

### *Blogs*

Do you want traffic? Then you want a blog! Blogs are your best friend. They are easy to maintain, come in prepackaged software that is easy to install and customize, and best of all, they use the magic of RSS to drive traffic to your site.

RSS stands for "really simple syndication". Most blog software is set up to use RSS automatically. The way this works is, every time you publish a new post to your blog, the RSS system will collect all the relevant data about the post and 'ping' the various blog indexing services out there. These services will provide automatic links around the Internet, and will also make links to your content available through newsreading software. Furthermore, the search engines automatically index your blog each time they pick up the 'ping' through the blog indexes.

This happens automatically! Just install the blog software, follow the defaults, and away you go! Your web host will usually provide some installed blog software for you already. The most popular blog software is usually Wordpress, Live Journal, or B2Evolution.

Anything goes in a blog post. It's kind of like a newspaper column or a journal. Blogs and niche focus go hand in hand. You can either handle your blog posting yourself (if you can send email, you can make a blog post!) or hire a professional blogger (cheapest work on the Internet!).



Here's a fast example I slapped together. Note that the current post is about the "Pirates of the Caribbean" ride at Disney. Note that even though I only mention Disney a few times in the context of the post, that was enough data for the Google adbot to display relevant ads to visiting Disney World. This is clue number-one: if the Google ads know what to display, your site has enough keywords for that topic to show up properly in search results as well.

Remember than nobody expects you to be William Shakespeare when it comes to a blog - that's what's so great about it! A simple paragraph or two per post will suffice. You can share interesting links, talk about a news story

relevant to your topic, publish a handy list of tips of interest to your niche focus, and so on. The easiest content publishing known to man.

If you're stumped for blog content ideas, here's two places to find inspiration:

### **Stuff-a-Blog**

(<http://stuffablog.com/>)

A free online service where you enter a post topic and it provides you with links, images on Flickr, a map if a location is mentioned, recent news stories on the topic, icons, and much more. While I wouldn't make a whole site based on Stuff-a-Blog's content, this is good for padding out your posts for those odd days when the muses just aren't inspiring you.

### **Blogger Search**

(<http://search.blogger.com/>)

Blogger.com's own search system; enter your topic and get a slew of blogs talking about that subject currently. Browse for ideas.

### *Articles*

Articles should typically be 500 to 800 words in length and be natural writing on the topic which visitors will actually read. As with blog posts, as long as the key focus is mentioned somewhere in the content a couple of times, that's enough for a relevant search hit. As opposed to a blog post, an article is a stable, static web page all in itself. Similar to a blog, you will want ads along the side or at the top. You should have a group of articles with an index page linking to all of them - about 20 articles on a topic will be enough to get the search engines to index you for that topic.

With articles, web surfers will expect a slightly more formal tone than with a blog. So, if you have some knowledge of the topic, you can write these yourself. Or you can hire a professional freelance writer. Finally, you can visit any one of several free article submission sites out there. A link I gave earlier for a different purpose:

### **Ezine Articles**

(<http://www.ezinearticles.com/>)

How it works: articles are pre-written and stored here for you to use FREE! The only catch is, you have to include the link at the bottom of the article as well. That link will go to wherever the article's author wants it to go- usually to their own site. That might be not a good way to go. Say your niche interest is in wine - you publish a series of articles on wine written by somebody else with a wine site, linking to your competition! And you don't get paid for that referral, plus you've encouraged the visitor to leave without clicking on your ad. So use your judgment: if you're hurting for content and cash, you can post some free articles temporarily. But most webmasters hire a paid freelance writer for this purpose (and this is also cheap work - frequently around \$10. per article), or write their own.

Finally...

### *Visitor-Driven Content*

It's better that I simply show you some examples:

digg - "How does a gun silencer work?" - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help All Search or Tag here blogger search

Disable Cookies CSS Forms Images Information Miscellaneous Outline Resize Tools View Source Options

digg News Videos Podcasts Join Digg Login Search the News

All Topics Technology Science World&Business Sports Entertainment Gaming Submit a New Story

All Space Environment Health General Sciences

## The Coca-Cola Company

Find out more about the world's most valuable brand.  
[www.the-coca-cola-company.com/company](http://www.the-coca-cola-company.com/company)

193 diggs "How does a gun silencer work?"

It is amazing that anything is able to silence a gun, but gun silencers actually work on a very simple principle.

by CAMUS1CATUL submitted 26 hours 51 minutes ago in General Sciences [science-news.stuffworks.com](http://science-news.stuffworks.com) | Bury | D

Comments (25) Who Digg or Blogged This? Blog This Link Email This Link

Turn Potentially Filter On sort by date (4 diggs or higher)

by allhard 26 hours ago +3 diggs [cool]

Thats very interesting, +1Digg

by ZopherT 44 minutes ago +4 diggs [cool]

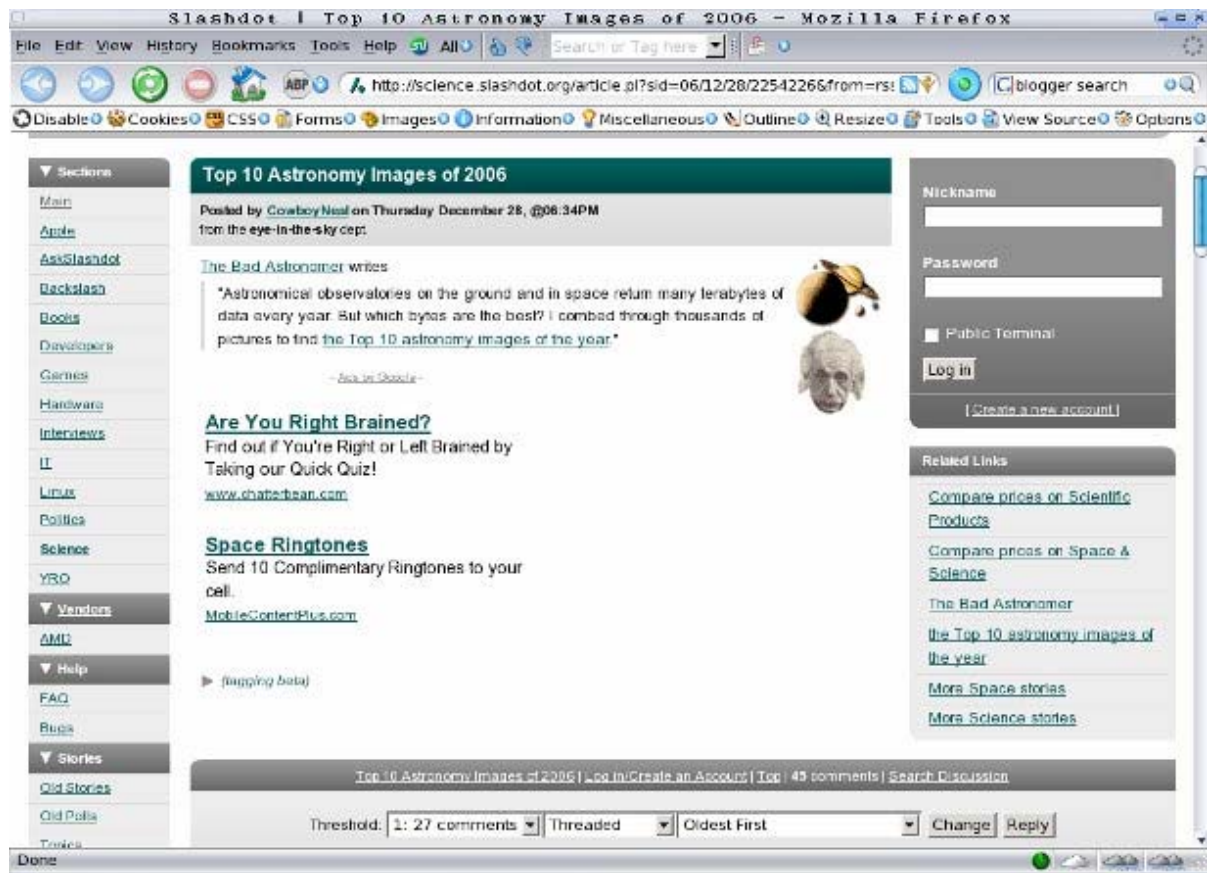
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suppressor>  
Way, way more informative.

by SACSTATE 58 minutes ago +3 diggs

Done

SONY Blu-ray Disc

like no other



I'm sure you're familiar with Digg and Slashdot. These are two hugely successful sites with much in common: They used to focus on niche "geek" topics but have expanded far beyond into general news sites. They are each little more than bulletin board systems: set up with rules for joining, submitting stories, and commenting, with other members empowered to moderate submissions and comments. They are examples of the "social web", where you can add other members to your friends list and thereafter anything that your friend submits gets bookmarked automatically for you as well.

Tons of other forms of this method exist, going back through sites like Yahoo and Delphiforums all the way back to the earliest Usenet and BBS days. It is an entirely different game from straight web authoring. While you can hardly be a beginner and equal the success of Digg, most web hosts will offer basic



message-board software, just like a blog system, that will be fairly easy to set up.

With niche marketing, some niche topics will be a good place to drop in a bulletin board and others won't. Remember that your target audience, because they occupy a niche, are passionate and devoted to the topic and will then have something to say about it. The pros and cons of visitor-driven content:

### **Pro**

- Your visitors supply you with content for free!
- Once you get the site promoted, it can take off and become a popular center of the culture around your niche. Stimulating debate, helpful people answering each other's questions - it can be quite fun at times, as you engage your visitors in this shared experience.
- You may be able to charge membership in some scenarios.
- Once you set up a good system, it practically runs itself. You can have a peer-moderation system, for instance, so that the members can control undesirables.

### **Con**

- Security risks - are you ready to protect yourself from identity theft, PHP injection attacks, attempts to hack into and take over your site?
- Spam - to allow the public to comment is to fight constantly with spammers. Boy oh boy, if you haven't had experience with this, it is a constant hassle! Not a week goes by that some idiot doesn't come along trying to exploit your web site for a free ride for themselves.
- Flamers and trolls - problem visitors who are just there to start a fight and cause trouble. About the 25th time you see two duelists cussing

each other out with neither one of them ready to back down, you'll get pretty fed up.

- Difficult to get it off the ground - nobody wants to be the first to join. Once you have a lot of members, more will pour in. With no visitors, you have to work to get them.

And now for the **Ads...**

Ads should not be too flashy. Especially avoid irritating ones, such as pop-ups, bouncing flashers, and most animated ones. Note each of the screen-shots I have provided above. This is where you want to put your ads, at the top or along the side. Note that in each case, the ads are either plain text or simple graphic banners. Not shoved too far into the visitor's face, but not impossible to find either.

Ads come in two flavors: content-focused or straight static ads. Static ads would be like a banner for a specific site or product. You pick it, you place it, and that's it. The content-focused ads are the much more popular choice, especially for blogs and bulletin boards. They crawl the page, analyze your content, and generate the ads that visitors are most likely to prefer, changing as the content of your page changes. Google's AdSense is the number-one most popular choice, but don't let that stop you from investigating similar services provided by Yahoo, MSN, and Amazon.

The payment plan is up to the individual program, but frequently there will be a code of conduct to adhere to, which you had better follow if you want to keep doing business.

Whew! We had a lot of ground to cover in this chapter. Hopefully, you at least have a grasp of the basics of content and advertising as a web business

model. This is a topic big enough to fill a book in itself (and there are many more out there), but we need to move on to an even better method for profiting from a niche market: your very own product!

# Chapter 7 - The Paid Product Model

## Smart Internet Niche Marketing

Internet niche marketing is a field which can be lucrative for many as long as they study the industry first and make an honest effort to learn about the industry. Even those without a formal education can excel in Internet niche marketing as long as they understand the key elements of the industry. Such elements include selecting a niche carefully, organizing an effective marketing campaign and undergoing a continuing education process to stay aware of the trends in the industry.

### Select a Niche Carefully

One of the most important components of a smart Internet niche marketing campaign is to select a niche carefully. A niche is a specific subdivision of a broader category. The owner of a niche website is usually quite knowledgeable about this particular topic and capable of creating quality content which is highly informative and accurate. Knowledge of a particular niche subject is one of the first factors a marketer should consider when selecting a niche. Ideally the niche they select should be one for which they have an interest as well as a great deal of pre-existing knowledge.

The second factor to consider in selecting a niche is to look for a topic which has a large potential audience but not a great deal of other websites competing for the attention of these Internet users. An exceptional niche website can enter a crowded market and excel but it does take considerably more effort because customers tend to be loyal and swaying them can be more difficult than winning the loyalty of new customers.

## Organize an Effective Internet Marketing Campaign

Once a niche is selected it is time to begin orchestrating an effecting Internet marketing campaign. This campaign may include commercial websites, informative websites, message boards, e-newsletters, ebooks, email campaigns or any combination of these components. Websites will most likely be included as at least part of any Internet marketing campaign so developing keywords relevant to the niche and optimizing the websites for these keywords is important.

While optimizing the websites for particular keywords is important for achieving high search engine rankings, it is also imperative to carefully consider your target audience in the design of your website. While high search engine rankings will be increased traffic flow to your website, a clever design which meets the needs and expectations of your target audience is also important. High search engine rankings will bring in traffic but once you have website visitors it is important to capture their attention.

## Stay Up to Date on Current Issues in the Industry

Finally, it is important to remember that Internet marketing is continually evolving and it is important for those who profit from the industry to stay up to date on the current trends in the industry. This is important because if ground breaking trends which greatly benefit a niche website, smart Internet marketers realize they have to begin employing these trends to avoid being left behind in their niche.

One way to stay up to date on the latest trends is to participate in message boards focused on Internet marketing. Through these communities those in the industry voice their opinions on different marketing strategies. Smart Internet marketers can use this information to formulate their own opinions and test strategies which are currently being discussed as new and innovative.

Much more straight-forward is the profit model with a product. One of the benefits of selling something yourself as opposed to advertising for somebody else's sales is that the ads will only dribble in tiny amounts of change at a time, even if you're getting thousands of visits, where the product you sell makes profit you don't have to share. That's because the ad revenue is just a percentage of the target's sales - and there they are, selling a product just like you could be doing!

If you have any kind of creative talent, be it in writing, drawing, animating, or design, you know what a bonus it can be. For the rest of us, there is the option of paying a talented freelancer to create our product for us.

All through this book, I've been suggesting different products that can be sold to your niche market. When it comes to niche markets, the products you will be selling will most likely satisfy one of these needs:

15. A tool or utility - special hobbies and interests sometimes require special equipment.
16. Information - guides, tutorials, and educational content of all kinds, to be sold in ebook form.
17. Entertainment - your own comic book line, or a video game with the niche theme.

18. Novelty - the huge market for items with which to proclaim your niche interest to the world. So there's the T-shirts, coffee mugs, calendars, etc.

### **Niche markets and the Novelty Item**

Remember in the first part of this book when I said "marketing is psychology". Novelty items are exhibit A. There is something deeply embedded in the human psyche which drives a need to proclaim one's individuality by actually conforming to a narrower group. As people go through their lives, they accumulate a stronger sense of identity drawn from the lifestyle choices they have made. It says "I'm different; you have to deal with me this way.", even to the point of proclaiming the clothing brand name on the clothing if nothing else is written on it.

"We're the Abercrombie & Fitch clique! If you want to talk to somebody wearing Tommy Hilfiger, you'll have to go to *those people over there*. We don't associate with their kind."

Is it some primal method of marking territory? A way to ingrain identity? A uniform to conform to a standard? It's all of these and more. Suffice it to say that the smaller the niche, the fiercer the loyalty. A fact which you can exploit by offering novelty merchandise with the tribal markings of the niche membership all over it, be it a wallet with a Guns 'n' Roses logo (yes, they're now a niche. A tiny one.), a bumper sticker that proclaims "I heart my hermit crab" to the world, a T-shirt with "Go away or I'll replace you with a

shell script" (in bad-dude sysadmin black, of course!), or about two hundred other potential items.

CafePress, which I mentioned earlier, is just one of many sites offering a virtual store service. How it works is, you sign up for a free account, then decide which of the promotional items you want to brand with your design. You either draw the design yourself or of course hire a freelancer to do it (graphics work by the piece is very cheap this way). You upload the design, click to load the item into your "online store front", and set a price. You pay no money for this, and in fact nothing more happens until a buyer clicks the order button. Then CafePress prints it up and sends the price to you minus their cost, and sends the merchandise to the customer.

How easy is that?

Almost as easy as being in the ebook business...

### **The Niche Market Ebook**

As odd as it may sound coming from an ebook, the ebook market is pretty big. In both the United States and the European Union, it has become the number one format of purchased content online. If you decide that the product you create will be an ebook, you will have a number of focuses to decide on:

- A beginner's guide to the niche subject... (example title "Baking for Klutzes")
- A catalog listing, an index, or a directory... (example title "101 Places to Look for College Grant Money")



- An intermediate or advanced guide or manual... (example title "Zen and the art of Cactus Gardening")
- Straightforward information (example title "The History of Tarot")

There's no reason why you couldn't offer more than one, of course. But let's examine in detail what steps we go through to make an ebook happen:

- Deciding on the topic.
- Planning the layout.
- Either writing it yourself or hiring a freelancer to write it.
- Marketing the ebook to an audience.

Deciding on the topic, as the academic circles say, is an "exercise left up to the reader". It depends on your niche and what you feel that niche wants. Also, because of your interest in niche marketing, you might do well to try to research what is available on the market and then take an original tactic. Is the manga market flooded with "How to draw manga" titles? Have you thought of "How to draw horror manga" ? Maybe try to breathe fresh life into a stale genre. Of course, keep an eye on your bottom line. Sometimes nobody is selling a title because nobody is interested in it.

Planning the layout will give you flash-backs to junior high, because it is exactly like doing an outline. You know:

- \* 1 Introduction to X
  - o 1.1 Background of X
    - + 1.1.1 History of X
  - o 1.2 Why X is a good thing

- + 1.2.1 Some examples of the benefits of X
- o 1.3 Pros and Cons of X
  - + 1.3.1 Deciding on X
- \* 2 Implementing X
  - o 2.1 How to do X
  - o 2.2 How to make money from X
- \* 3 The X way...
- \* 4 References to X

or something like that. Keep in mind that if you hire a writer, you can have the expert guide you in the format and presentation of the material. Make it a collaborative act. The writer, with experience in their field, will be able to recommend more ideas as the project unfolds. As your outline forms, the main points should become the chapter titles and the sub-points will be things which are covered in each chapter.

As for writing it yourself, that's for if you feel you have the knack for it. Writing is one of the oldest crafts; teaching you how to write is outside the scope of this book. However, you can always jot down your ideas and knowledge of the niche field, then present this to a hired writer who will turn your material into your ebook's copy. In this case, you would still provide the main bulk of material, and the writer is merely charged with polishing it into the final presentation of your product. A re-writer! Or, in the jargon, a "ghost-writer".

### **Getting a Freelancer**

There are dozens of Freelancer sites out there. Some notable ones:

Rent-A-Coder

(<http://www.rentacoder.com/RentACoder/default.asp>)

The original and one of the best. Not just for coders (as in programmers) anymore, the site is a thriving resource to find writers, graphic artists, web designers, and any other creative worker whose field involves computer technology as a medium.

eLance

(<http://www.elance.com/index.html?WT.srch=1&rid=112IE>)

One of the most comprehensive. eLance offers many of the same kinds of freelancers as Rent-A-Coder, plus a focus on consultants. Also a hugely popular and established site.

iFreeLance

(<http://www.ifreelance.com/>)

A newer market, but one which has risen to some popularity. Slightly more upscale than the others, with an apparent focus on smaller jobs.

The way a freelance site works is:

1. Sellers (providers) register with the site. Just like with any job, they submit a resume and usually have some kind of program through which they are certified.
2. Buyers (that's you) also sign up with the site and post projects on the job board. An auction begins, in which various freelance workers have the opportunity to view your job and post a bid. Usually, you will have to deposit money with the site, and will be able to adjust options such as the range of price you are willing to pay and the length of time the post should remain open for bids.

3. When you have selected the winning bidder, they begin work on your project. You will have the opportunity to view progress and interact with the seller until the project is finished.
4. The freelance site acts as an agent between you and the freelancers. Usually, they hold your money and their work until you approve the transaction. This is a "double-bind" transaction to ensure that neither party can be cheated. Since the reputation of the freelancing service is at stake, you will usually have a number of avenues to pursue should you think the freelancer isn't doing the job you wanted. You, the client, have the right to demand review by the site's arbitration board or to not approve the work, for instance.
5. If all goes well, you buy the work and get all rights to use it as you wish; the seller gets your money. The freelance site gets its money as well, of course, which may be via charging a commission from the buyer or seller, or charging a per-transaction flat fee, or a membership, or however they do it.

This is a very loose template, because different sites have different business models. Whatever you do, you should pick a reputable, established site to act as your agency. Check around for references. Search the Internet for testimonials. Check into a webmaster's bulletin board and ask around.

Here are some tips to help you get what you want from the freelancing site:

1. Post a CLEAR AND DETAILED description of what you want! This is the number-one reason jobs go wrong on a freelance site: A client will post a job with nothing for the description but "a picture of a kangaroo" and get offers to draw an encyclopedia kangaroo illustration, a 3D rendered kangaroo, a cartoon of a boxing kangaroo,

etc. Meanwhile what they really wanted was a two-color vector graphics logo in a conservative style of a bounding kangaroo in profile for their business cards. Don't make people try to read your mind!

2. Choose somebody who really can do the job. A reputable, well-maintained site should guard against scam artists and have channels in place for you to report wrong-doing and seek reimbursement for a bad transaction. Some signs that a bidder isn't all they're cracked up to be: little or poor communication, grandiose claims of being experts in *\*everything\** (technology is huge; there is no walking, living being in this world who has a mastery of everything!), presenting themselves as a large company when it's just one person, or "spam bidding" where they bid on every single job on the board with a stock bid and the same message for every job. If you discover a shifty character, report them to the site immediately.
3. Ask for a sample or reference to previous work. The system on the site should be set up so you can correspond through the site to nail down the deal. You can ask for a sample of previous work, references from previous customers, a proposal outlining how they would do your work, or an example or rough draft (a sample chapter, a small watermarked version of a graphic, a demo of a software program, etc.). Just like the rules of business for any venture, you are the "boss" and you should conduct it just like a job interview.
4. Don't just award the bid and then disappear! Check back at least once per day to provide feedback and further guidance to the seller while they are working on your project. Questions and problems may come up, or they may send you a demo or rough draft and give you the opportunity to review their work and suggest improvements for the final revision which you will be buying.

5. Give a project deadline that takes into account all of the factors. If you need the job done in 48 hours flat, with no way around it, say so - but it will be difficult for the transaction to go well under such a tight deadline. Whenever possible, post the job as far in advance as you can and be generous enough with the deadline. A deadline padded with a few extra days at the end gives you time to review the work and ask for improvements. You have every right in the world to ask for revisions and corrections to the final product.
6. And one more small detail: when posting the job, be specific in what file format you want the work to be presented in. Computers being the pesky beasts they are, there are dozens of file formats on dozens of platforms. You can ask for writing work to be given to you in plain text, rich text, PDF, or Microsoft Word doc format. Specify whether images are .jpg, .gif, .png, or whatever it is you need. Specify that web pages be made portable for Internet Explorer, Firefox, Opera, and so on (actually, all web work should adhere to W3C standards so that they are usable in any web browser on any platform!). Indicate for software projects what platform you want the program to run on (Windows NY, Vista, Unix, Apple OS X, BSD, and so on.).

Millions of business entrepreneurs across the Internet do business this way every day, and in fact the freelance/outsourcing model is becoming the more popular way to do business in the 21st century. It allows all parties to work out of their homes. It exposes both buyers and sellers to the choices available in the global market place across international boundaries. Best of all, it is a direct trade of skill for money, without all that bogus bureaucracy getting in the way. For instance, you don't have to worry about the employee having a green card or providing their tax information, as the freelance site does this for you. While you can ask for evidence of credentials

such as diplomas and certificates, the real thing that counts is whether the person you're hiring can do the work, and the freelance market allows you to evaluate worker by their work and not their resume.

Now that you have a product, your next question will be "how do I sell this thing?" So we'd better cover that next...

## Chapter 8 - Selling your Product Online

They are both web pages, but there's a world of difference. The non-sales page can be anything. A Flash animation, an image gallery, a bunch of forum posts. But the sales page - the page from which you sell your item - has one goal: to sell your item. If it doesn't sell the item, leave it out. In fact, we're going to stop calling it a web page entirely, and call it your *online storefront*.

Look at any retail sales environment - we're talking about a physical store you shop at every day - and notice the set-up. There's the display - the items are easy to find. The store is easy to navigate. The counter where you check out is always in a prominent location. notice in any retail store, no matter what they sell or how they set the place up, the sales counter where the cash register is is placed so it's one of the first things you see when you enter the store. Absolutely everything there is directed towards propelling you conveniently to your transaction.

If you checked out [WebPagesThatSuck.com](http://WebPagesThatSuck.com) from my recommendation two chapters ago, you'll notice that the site pays a lot of attention to business websites. In fact, the author states at some points that home pages with a non-business purpose really don't apply - his focus is on online storefronts.

Here's a random example off the net:



[Chess History](#) • [Checkout](#) • [Contact Us](#) • [Resources](#) • [Other Items](#)

**The Chess Piece Categories**

- All Chess Products
- New Chess Products
- Chess Boards
- Collectible Chess Sets
- Camel Bone Chess Sets
- Carved Wooden Chess
- Metal Chess Sets
- Staunton Chess Sets
- Theme Chess Sets
- Travel Chess Sets
- Magnetic Chess Sets
- Limited Edition Chess
- Chess Computers
- Electronic Chess
- Hand-held Chess Computers
- Digital Chess Clocks
- Other Chess Gifts
- \$250+

**Product Questions ?**

We welcome any questions you may have about any of our products. Our success as an online retailer has been achieved by offering the very best service in this respect.

CALL US TOLL FREE  
1-866-62-CHESS  
(8am-5pm EST)

Or please [email us](#) with any questions you may have and we will respond normally within 24 hours and often much sooner.

Home » Computer Chess » Hand-held Computers

**Product ID: CH08**  
**Maestro Travel Chess Computer**

Superb styling, beautifully backlit screen and extended range of player strengths makes this a must have chess computer for all who encounter it! See your game develop on the blue backlit screen and make moves at the touch of a stylus. With 100 playing levels to choose from, this is a great choice for the intermediate player. Slip it into your pocket and play anywhere!

**Program Features:**

- 100 Playing Levels: 60 Fun and 40 Competition
- Hints and Tips and Coach Mode available
- Most major opening systems to learn
- Backlit blue LCD display – clear visibility in all light conditions (with option to turn off to conserve battery power)
- Stylus housed integrally
- Protective Cover for added screen protection
- Built-in Chess Clock
- Unfinished games held in memory
- Automatic Power Down feature to save battery life

**Technical Specification**

- Keys: 8
- Chessboard: 9x8 Contact Membrane (touch panel)
- LCD Display: 11 character dot-matrix, 68 x 79 mm
- Batteries: 3 AAA/AM4/RO3
- Dimensions: 128 x 87 x 22mm
- Weight: 200g

Need More information? Download the User Guide

**Gift Wrap?:**

**Price:** \$99.95  
115.97 CAD 75.89 EUR 50.86 GBP

[Email Friend](#)

[Write Review](#)

[« Previous](#) | [Next »](#)

December 30, 2006

**Latest News!**  
**Email us here!**

emer text or leather pads on our luxury chess sets ...What is your preference?!

Seitak's Master Chess Computer normally

[Products](#) • [Affiliates](#) • [Shopping](#) • [Links](#) • [Special Offers](#) • [Copyright](#)

Not a perfect example, but it will do. This is a chess-playing computer from a site that sells many game-related products. Even though the company sells many items, each item gets its own static page, with no confusion as to what we are buying. There is the image showing what we can get, a simple list of features, the price, and a not-too-complicated purchase area. Other

information not related to the immediate product is off to the sides and bottom. Note the minimalist, clean design - your online storefront should never look busy like a circus.

Variations on this theme will be few. Depending on your setup, if you have many products, you can link them all from a little gallery. But always, when you get to the purchase point, the item being purchased must have its own page. The stimulating content on the rest of your site belongs someplace else and out of the way. But the rest of the site should be easy to navigate to and from, particularly the other products, so there's usually a side bar or footer. Other links provided usually include "contact us", "testimonials", "security policy", and the other links you're familiar with from seeing online store-fronts.

At the very least, most online storefronts will include:

19. Headline - a short introduction, usually just the product's name.
20. Sales pitch - your call to action, informing the buyer why this is the product that they need.
21. Feature list - A list, usually bulleted, telling the buyer about all the features of the product.
22. Credentials - Guarantees, testimonials , or any assurance to the buyer that the product works as claimed. Kind of optional depending on the product. If it's won awards, list them. If you have happy former customers who use your product and you can link to them, do so here.
23. Order button - the equivalent of the cash register in a physical store. Usually identified by a shopping-cart icon or a button labeled "buy", "check-out", "order", etc.

As with anything else, you can either design the page yourself or hire a hand to help out. The thing to remember is, the sales page should be simple and sparse, and that way it's easy to do. You can have a few simple graphics or decoration, but it's really not necessary. Almost everything in the list you can do yourself, with the exception of the order button/shopping cart. And with that, there's pre-packaged software to help!

These are simply called shopping cart applications. These handy applications take care of all the credit-card number-crunching, account-interacting, and security for you. Your web host might provide one or two, or you can get them off a download site such as HotScripts.com. They're usually written in PHP or ASP and have their own installer and instructions for placement and usage on your site.

In the case of CafePress products, you only need to put a link to the CafePress store instead of providing your own shopping cart app. All sales of CafePress products are handled right on their own site, so it's even easier to set this up.

Along with CafePress, there are also similar services online for book publishers. No, not just an ebook, but a regular, printed, paper book. That resource is Lulu.com (<http://www.lulu.com/>) and just like CafePress, Lulu doesn't print a copy until one's been ordered. Like CafePress, you set a sale price and they add their commission and that's the consumer price. So you can skip hosting a copy on your site and set up an account through Lulu and send customers there, or you can sell the ebook from your site and offer a printed copy through Lulu as well.

## **Making a sales pitch**

This will be a delicately-crafted few paragraphs. You neither want to oversell nor undersell. Avoid any annoying over-formatting, such as too much bold, italics, header tags, blinking or scrolling text, flashing banners, or animated gifs. Remember that your average web visitor has seen most everything before - today's audience is sales-resistant. That being said, you want to lead the visitor through your sales message and guide them towards a buying decision.

### **How to appeal to the niche psychology**

Inhabitants of a niche are generally an easier sale than a mainstream market. There is less competition for the business, and the potential customer is usually a little bit grateful and/or relieved to have found somebody who caters to them. A reverse effect of the 21st century Internet is that, with this flood of instant communication everywhere, you would expect that any wish you had would be easy to gratify. The reality is, the mainstream stuff is right there for you to find, but if you have a niche interest, finding that one thing that you really want actually seems to become harder.

One example is the game Sudoku. Sudoku is now a hugely popular rage in the United States, and has been for two years, now. I almost fell over to see a whole rack of Sudoku puzzle books at the regular corner convenience store. That was because ten years ago, I am absolutely certain that I was the only red-blooded American to have ever heard of the game at all. Over in Japan at the time, I believe they had Sudoku on every street corner. But I had to scour the Earth for new puzzles, and slowly my interest waned. Then overnight, something (nobody's still quite sure what) happened and Sudoku

became front-page news. After ten years of getting a blank look whenever I mentioned it, I now had friends trying to introduce me to it. That's how it is in a niche market, feast or famine!

So that's one thing to keep in mind. If you have picked the right niche, you will have just enough customers to make it worth while, but scarce enough that they're bowled over that they can get what they wanted from you.

Word-of-mouth will also go far in a niche.

Some general things to keep in mind while composing niche-focused sales copy:

- Jargon! Most every niche has its own jargon. These might be well-worn acronyms, terms that have sprung up, and dozens of little words and phrases that mean something only within the niche. Pick this up and learn it well. Don't overuse jargon, but do work it in where it would be authentic.
- Don't sound generic. You should be tailoring the sales pitch for each niche product. It should not sound like it came from a general template.
- Provide a cozy feeling of community. Talk like one of the tribe; hint that you and your potential customer are united in a common interest, excluding the outsider who don't "get it". Whatever you do, don't make it phony, but if you can do it authentically, it will give your pitch that much more pull.

All of the above will go on top of the standard sales pitch technique. The rest, common to all markets, still applies here:

1. Theme - Being only the most critical factor in the success of any sales spiel. Because the theme runs like a thread throughout the copy, building excitement in the product, inducing the desire to buy.
2. Structure - If you don't know the general sales structure, go read some ads. I'll wait right here until you get back. OK, it's obviously not hard, is it? Introduce it, announce that you're going to take this opportunity to tell you about a great new product, show why they need this, hit them with your low price, let the price sink in while you mention some more benefits, present the offer. The usual.
3. Message - Most copywriters only pay attention to this element, maybe even never considering the first two. That's the part that's in things like newspaper ads, after all.

Now, if you are still lost as to what to do, you are welcome to attend one of those fancy sales seminars that you will find every ten feet out there in the world. It's OK with me if you pay top dollar to get somebody's "secret of success". But honestly, you won't find much more than what I've told you here. The "secret of success" is always "use your common sense".

Well, we have our website. We have our profit model decided. If it's content and ads, we have our wonderful content in place and our ad affiliates all signed up and displayed in prime locations. If it's product, we have our product all created and the sales pitch in place to sell the products. We have followed some common sense and have not succumbed to dirty tricks trying to game the search engines. Instead, we have a standards-friendly sales page ready to sell our product like no tomorrow. We have set reasonable standards for our copy so search engines can find us.

We're open for business. Now, where are the customers?

Ooooooh, I know what we're missing. WEB TRAFFIC! Well, luckily, you've come to the right guy...

## Strategies for Internet Niche Marketing

The basic strategies of Internet niche marketing really do not vary drastically from the basic strategies used to market offline. In both cases the bottom line is the investor needs to develop a strategy for reaching a target audience and then entice members of this audience to perform a desired action. Sometimes this action is purchasing a product or service while other times it may simply be viewing a website, clicking on an advertisement or performing another specific action.

## Driving Traffic to a Website

For many Internet marketers the first step in their marketing strategy is to drive traffic to their website. One of the most effective ways to do this is through search engine optimization (SEO). SEO is a practice in which websites are designed and content for these websites is written in a manner which makes search engines believe the website is valuable to visitors searching for particular keywords. The relevance of optimizing a website for particular keywords is that visitors who search for these terms are likely members of the target audience.

Each search engine uses a unique algorithm to determine the worth of particular websites relevant to keywords and returns results ranking these websites accordingly. This is significant because Internet users are categorically looking for information quickly. They also tend to rely on search

engines to rank websites accurately and are much more likely to visit websites which are on the first page of results when they search for a particular word or phrase. Websites which fall on the second page may be visited but those further on the list are not likely to generate much traffic through search engine results. Search engine algorithms consider a number of factors when ranking websites. Some of these factors include keyword density, META tags, ALT tags, keyword prominence, inbound links and previous traffic. SEO is a complicated process with no guarantees for success. Many who profit from increased traffic to their websites are wise to employ consultants to properly optimize their websites.

SEO is not the only way to drive traffic to a particular website. Another popular option is to actively participate in trade related forums. These are communities where those who share particular interests congregate to share ideas, ask questions or just chat. Providing insightful commentary on these message boards and including a link to your website in your signature is one way an individual can drive additional traffic to his website. It is important to remember this should not cross the line to spam. It is acceptable to include a link in your signature if you are contributing appropriately to the conversation but incorporating a link without a valuable comment may be considered spam.

### Converting Website Visitors to Customers

Increasing traffic to a website is only half the battle when it comes to Internet marketing. Ideally those who are visiting the website are members of the target audience. This won't always be the case but if care was taken during the previous step most of the visitors should have an interest in the website. Now that this is accomplished it is time to utilize the website to



market directly to the members of the target audience. This can be done in a number of ways and is largely dependent on the goals of the marketer. Profit through a website is usually accomplished in one of two ways. These methods are enticing visitors to purchase a product or service and enticing visitors to perform a desired action such as clicking on an advertisement.

Ecommerce websites are those which are selling products or services. They profit when visitors make a purchase through their website. Some of the marketing strategies for accomplishing this goal are creating a user friendly website where finding products or services is simple, providing products or services which are of value to the visitors at reasonable prices, providing useful information enticing the visitors to make a purchase and offering the visitors incentives to make purchases.

Other websites generate a profit by enticing visitors to perform specific actions. Pay per click websites are the most common type of website which operates in this capacity. These websites typically have useful content as well as advertisements from vendors who may be of interest to the website visitors. Providing content which piques the visitor's interest in the advertiser's products will entice the visitor to click on the advertisement to learn more.

## Chapter 9 - Hustling Traffic

Yet another topic that could fill a book on its own. I don't brag about much, but one thing I think I could do is get 5,000 hits per day to a blank page. It's because computers and I have kind of grown up together. I've gotten to see them evolve and take notes. And I do so totally legit, with no spam or scams. And I don't pay anybody. So let's get started with my process for traffic success tailored for the niche interest site:

### **Submit your site!**

Don't waste time with a paid search submission service or with tracking down every tiny little niche search page. You'll go crazy that way. Search engines share their results with each other, anyway. Here's the Big Five:

Google

( <http://www.google.com/addurl/?continue=/addurl> )

Yahoo

( <http://search.yahoo.com/info/submit.html> )

MSN

( <http://submitit.bcentral.com/msnsubmit.htm> )

DMOZ

( <http://dmoz.org/add.html> )

Alexa

( [http://www.alexa.com/site/help/webmasters#crawl\\_site](http://www.alexa.com/site/help/webmasters#crawl_site) )

Go to each one, submit your URL, pick a category for it in the directory, whatever you have to do. Each of these engines either has ten other searches that use it, or in the case of DMOZ, that's a public open directory which is crawled by such services as AOL. Search engine crawlers find stuff on the web just like you do, by following links. Remember that you don't necessarily have to submit to every site on earth - once one spider can find it, the others will follow. After all, it's their job to find stuff, that's how they stay in business. They shouldn't have to be hit on the nose with your URL. They should only require one link from anywhere, and be all over you like ants on a donut.

### **Use your sig!**

"Sig" stands for "signature". Almost everywhere on the Internet where you post anything, be it an email, a discussion group, a comment on a board, a blog, etc. will allow you to append a signature. From now on, you will have your site's link in your signature. Suddenly, you will also become unusually sociable! You will be more likely to join places and post feedback, offer your two cents on discussion boards, agree with blog posts. Be sure you and your site are seen in public places. Is there a story on Digg today that's getting all the hits? Then you go there too, and add your input in the comments. Note: DO NOT SPAM! But have something relevant to say for a sentence or two, and incidentally your site's link just happens to be included on the message.

### **Publish link-bait!**

Even if you have absolutely no interest in publishing content, you will need *\*some\** copy on your page or when the search engines get to where you are, they will have nothing to index anyway! So you have no choice; you must have content. I have already made a case for blogs earlier, but I'll say

it one more time: having a website in the 21st century without a blog is like nailing the door of your store closed and hanging a sign on it that says "STAY AWAY!!!" Search engines love blogs. People love blogs. Blogs have devoured the web by now, anyway. So get a blog on your own site.

What is link-bait? A delicious little morsel of blog content that is guaranteed to pull in hits. Even if you normally do all of your site content itself, you might want to especially pay one select writer for a small job. Explain specifically that you need 5 posts of about 200 words each of link-bait for a blog. And be sure to explain your site's focus and provide a link so they can go there and see what you've got.

Get your link-bait and post it one at a time. The best time to post link-bait (for the US anyway) is on a Friday or Saturday morning, at about 4AM so your RSS feed will dribble it in right when either (a) week-day cubicle-dwellers are bored and surfing at work, or (b) weekend net junkies will start surfing their weekend away. Now, have a membership to big name social sites such as Digg, Netscape, and Reddit. Go ahead and post your own link-bait to these sites to get the ball rolling. They probably won't get ranked very high unless you also happen to be a top submitter, but the few hits may catch on. All you need is one person who *is* a top submitter to think it's cool. That person - for free! - may post a link to another site that they frequent.

Some examples of link-bait, if you write it yourself:

24. HUMOR! Number one, the big enchilada, is anything funny. People gobble it up. A satire piece, a funny story that happened to you, a top-ten list like on David Letterman, light, funny stuff. A little goes a long, long way.

25. Any list. Net readers are skimmers. Most of your web audience isn't ever in the mood to read Einstein's theory of relativity - give them some fun lists to browse. Include the number of list items in the title.
26. Controversy. Be deliberately provocative. Don't be afraid to get people a little ticked at you; pick a subject that's getting a lot of ink this week and formulate an opinion - a reasonable one! - that goes contrary to the prevailing opinion. Your in-response comments will show about 75% people saying you're wrong with a feeble 25% saying "I thought the same thing, but was scared to say so. Thank you for saying it for me." Visitors will argue with each other. But through it all, there are your links! More traffic coming in. Be sure the controversial nature of your post is evident from the title. There is no such thing as bad publicity!
27. A tutorial. People love anything that teaches them something. A how-to, a guide, a step-by-step walk-through. Pick a difficult problem that pops up in searches a lot and go right for it. Even if it seems easy to you! Everybody in the world is good at one thing, and for everything that you're good at, there are one hundred people on this Earth who never could figure it out.

### **Use blog directories**

Having a blog gives you a free pass to engage in behavior that you'd never get away with with a regular web page. Find blog directories and indexes and submit your blog there. Pay attention to category.

### **Use "Dummy" pages**

Some of you reading this might be wondering, why do I keep stressing a blog on your own site? Why not just use Blogger? Because that's the "dummy page" category: any free web host where you can post a "home

page" of content for free. So, yes, start your blog on Blogger *on the side*. Give it five posts and links to "more" which just happens to be on your own website. Dummy pages and freebie sites are for leading people into your site, and should never be your main site in itself. Now that we've scratched your Blogger itch, go here as well and *be sure everything you do links to your site*:

- MySpace - throw up a home page.
- YahooGroups - throw up a discussion group. You can name it the "official board" for your site.
- GEOCities, Angelfire, and Tripod - throw up a page with one of your best link-bait posts copied there, and the link to your site is "find more like this".
- Your ISP or web portal. Be it AOL, MSN, Yahoo, etc. That's right, your home page becomes another dummy page. Even if you don't get your Internet access through them, you can still join free.
- Your profile - anything that you can join will give you some profile space. Fill it. And join a lot of places.
- Slashdot - join here and fill in your "journal", plus put your link in your sig and post a few interesting comments to topics every now and then.

### **Google for a keyword in your niche plus the phrase "submit your site" or "submit your URL"**

And anyplace you find, go ahead and fill it in.

### **Post search-bait in your blog**

Here's an example of a search-bait scenario: you blogged about Renaissance Faires on your history-interest site. A week later, you notice searches coming in where the keywords were "good costumes for Ren Faires", "how to make a Ren Faire costume", "should I be a wizard or a warlock at the Ren

Faire?" Even though you wrote nothing about costumes, people are finding you for the Ren Fair keyword. So post a new blog about costumes, treating these frustrated searchers as if they were asking you questions.

Also check the search engine traffic-monitors we discussed earlier in this book. Pounce on any interest that flares up in your specialized field, and give people something to find when they type it in next time.

### **Wait three months**

Actually, keep doing all of the above in your spare time for three months. While doing so, be a real geek about checking your site's traffic report. Note where the hits come from, which bots crawl you, how long visitors stay when they come to your site, and what search terms people use to find your site. Three months is sometimes how long it takes for everybody to crawl your site, accept your submitted URL, approve the moderated comment you made, and so on.

If your site is any kind of good, and you add some fresh content to it, you should be getting at least decent traffic. Now after this, the rest of the steps are optional:

### **And now... some dirty tricks...**

Now, spamming is rotten; don't do it. Don't email spam, don't comment spam, don't fake-referrer spam. Don't be a jerk, because you will be caught and get into trouble.

But... BUT... here are some slightly dirty tricks you can get away with if you only do them five times or less. Do them a lot, and you'll get caught and ruin it for everybody, including yourself.

Create some bogus identities. One hundred of them is stupid; you'll get caught. But three or four... hey, a perfectly legitimate user may have different log-in names. Make a few "extra" log-ins, and submit your site to some of the social websites, or better yet vote up the submission you made under a different name. The concept is called a "sock-puppet", because you're making a dummy friend for yourself.

Become a Stumbler. Download Firefox, install the Stumble Upon extension, start a Stumble account, and vote for your site with a glowing review. Vote up a few other sites to make it appear random. Now forget about that ID. Uninstall Stumble and Firefox. Reinstall and create a new ID, possibly under a different email address. Get the idea? There's no harm in doing this three or four times, but that's it!

And you just might find an opportunity to work your site into the conversation in a chat room or two. Really, there's no harm in dropping the name of your site here and there. Don't spam, you'll be blocked, banned, and maybe get in trouble with your ISP. But one night, oops, maybe you got a little tipsy and posted a link in an AOL chat room or ten...

These are shady practices; they're also not very productive. But every now and then, at the right place and time, they can't hurt just once. If you skip these, it won't make much difference. And entirely excusable when you're just starting out. But if you can't get traffic without making a long-standing public nuisance of yourself, you probably are in the wrong line of work being a webmaster.



And it's not like Big Corporations don't drown the web in spam every single day. I hate to break this to you, but "astroturfer" is now a job description at companies like Microsoft and Adobe. The term "astroturfer" comes from the idea of creating a "fake grassroots" movement. People are hired to appear as impartial web citizens, but actually everything they say and do is done with a slant towards creating good word-of-mouth for their company, or modding down or flaming those who had something negative to say about their company or praising of the competition. Political campaigns are also famous for doing this.

Let's just say I didn't tell you this part, OK?

After all this, beyond these free tips, lies the realm of getting links through the direct involvement of others. That's either of link exchange or paid links or ads! We'll talk about both adding traffic and revenue streams to your existing web business in our final chapter, under the general category of "growth".

## **Selecting Keywords for Your Internet Marketing Niche**

Finding the right keywords for your niche is one of the most important aspects of Internet Marketing. The Internet is literally driven by keywords and failure to apply relevant and valuable keywords to your website and optimize your website for these keywords can be a fatal flaw in your marketing strategy. This section of this ebook will examine the importance of selecting keywords in your Internet marketing campaign.

The Supply and Demand Concept Applied to Niche Marketing

The principle of supply and demand is just as important in Internet marketing endeavors as it is offline. While supply and demand offline is often used to determine appropriate prices for goods and services, the online concept of supply and demand as it applies to Internet marketing determines whether or not there is room for more websites in a particular niche. This is very important because a niche which is already saturated is not an ideal situation. In selecting relevant keywords for a niche website it is important to evaluate the competition and determine whether or not there is room in this niche for more competition.

According to this supply and demand model, keywords should be examined before delving too deep into a particular niche. This is important because the keywords you select for your niche and your ability to optimize your website for these keywords are both critical to the success of your Internet marketing campaign. Some consideration to keywords should be given before selecting a niche. During this time preliminary keywords should be examined to determine whether or not the Internet is already saturated with these particular keywords.

Finding your niche to be saturated is not always an indication that abandoning your idea all together is necessary. Sometimes it is possible to further fine tune your niche into an even more specific idea. For example you may find there is a great deal of competition for the keywords, "dog grooming" with many of the competition coming in the form of large corporations. However if you further break this down and perhaps focus on dog grooming in particular states such as, "Alaska dog grooming" you may find there room on the market for your niche.

Characteristics of Valuable Keywords

During the process of selecting your niche, you likely examined the subject of keywords on a preliminary level but now it is time to really begin researching keywords for your niche. One of the most important characteristic of keywords is relevance. The keywords you select for your niche should be relevant to your website. This is important because, through search engine optimization (SEO), these keywords will drive your target audience to your website. It is also important because your website will be ranked by search engines according to these keywords and if they are not relevant to the content of your website you may be penalized with poor search engine results.

Keywords should also be innovative. There are likely many websites similar to yours offering comparable products and services. They are your direct competition and using the exact same keywords as them will not enable you to stand out from the competition. Look beyond the obvious keywords for your website and you will find yourself reaching more target audience members than anticipated.

### Finding the Right Words...Keywords That Is

Selecting keywords for a niche website is critical to the success of the website and should be considered an important part of the Internet marketing strategy. One of the most old fashioned, but reliable, ways to find keywords is through brainstorming. Get those with a vested interest in the website together for a brainstorming session particularly to develop keywords for the website. Sharing ideas will help to get the creativity flowing and may lead to the development of several new and innovative keywords for the niche.

Research is another step in the process of selecting keywords which cannot be underestimated. Start out by using search engines for your research. Many search engines provide reports on the popularity of certain search terms. The relative popularity of a particular term is a good indication of whether or not there is an interest in a certain niche. Next enter these terms into search engines to evaluate the direct competition. This will give you a good idea of how the competition is marketing their products and services. You can use this valuable information to expand upon their ideas and tailor their marketing strategy to meet your needs.

# Chapter 10 - Making your Online Business Grow

Whether a niche or a mainstream site, there will never be a time when you are "finished" maintaining a website. So, you should only be in this business if you really like it. It's competitive; in fact, it's cut-throat. When you're small, you're getting run over by the big players, and when you're big, everybody is nipping at your heels.

Assuming that you have a few sites established under your watch, here's some "commandments", if you will, for keeping your sites profitable:

## **Thou shalt always be extremely well-informed!**

Technology in the 21st century is a blur of activity. A new trend will pop up on Monday, get blogged to death by Tuesday, have ten businesses adopting it by Wednesday, attract venture capital by Thursday, and be the subject of three podcasts and a YouTube mashup by Friday. Think about the technology we take for granted today, and how much was existing only five years ago.

Here are some news resources. You should make a habit of bookmarking them and scanning them at least once a day, as you would your morning paper over your first cup of coffee. These newsfeed sites will help you keep a finger on the pulse of the next big thing:

*PopURLs*

(<http://popurls.com/>)

Wide area of general news.

### *Daily Rotation*

(<http://www.dailyrotation.com/>)

Huge assortment of news with technology focus.

### *Original Signal*

(<http://www.originalsignal.com/>)

News focused on the "latest thing" in the Internet

### *Linux News*

(<http://www.linuxhomepage.com/>)

Why should you care about Linux? Because it runs the Internet! Yes, Microsoft might own the home computer and office desktop, but on the server the penguin is king. Understanding Linux (and other Unix-clones like BSD and Solaris) will help you understand the Internet - most particularly how search engines work. The number-one web server, Apache, is native to Linux. Google runs on Linux - need I say more?

### **Thou shalt call thyself an entrepreneur, and act like one!**

An entrepreneur is "is a person who undertakes and operates a new enterprise or venture", and it "applies to someone who establishes a new entity to offer a new or existing product or service into a new or existing market." You're in business for yourself, so be sure that if you're going to be your own boss, you are the best boss you can be. The list of visionary entrepreneurs grows and shrinks over time, but here, currently, is the "A-list" of sites offering the best advice to web start-ups and web masters:

### *Paul Graham*

(<http://www.paulgraham.com/articles.html>)

Successful web start-up founder, now a web guru.

### *Creating Passionate Users*

([http://headrush.typepad.com/creating\\_passionate\\_users/](http://headrush.typepad.com/creating_passionate_users/))

Passionate users and niche markets; almost by definition, one is based on the other.

### *CopyBlogger*

(<http://www.copyblogger.com/>)

This guy's site is a sensation! Follow his examples, do what he says, and get traffic.

### **Thou shalt always promote thy site.**

Your first thought on waking in the morning should always be "What can I do *today* to promote my site?" A site that's left to rot tends to show it: its page design falls out of style, its traffic slows down, it drops off the radar. If your site doesn't keep growing, you have no-one to blame but yourself if your revenue doesn't grow. Everything I covered in the last chapter about bringing in traffic for free is just a starting point. That was the very least you could do. But I mentioned another way to get traffic is through direct deals with other web entities, and now here they are:

### *Affiliate Marketing*

The number-one marketing method on the web. Google's AdSense, Amazon's ads, and a host of other programs like Yahoo's YPN and ClicksAdsDirect are all examples. Running ads to generate revenue I've already mentioned; but if you're offering a paid product, putting out your own ad through one of these programs may be helpful. In most cases, it's pretty cheap to set up, and you'll see the results come in.

### *PayPerPost*

(<http://payperpost.com/>)

This is a currently popular way of advertising. In the PayPer Post program, you put out an offer of payment in exchange for getting mentioned on a blog! Now, you might wonder why a blogger would be interested in turning their blog into an advertising farm, but in fact because this works on a per-post basis, a blogger can take one-time advantage of the opportunity and still do business as usual the rest of the time. Especially this is useful in the niche market! Say your niche is wine; if you're selling an eBook on home wine brewing and I blog about wine, I was probably going to mention your book to my readers anyway. I might as well get paid for that traffic that I'm sending you!

### *Link Exchange Programs*

This is kind of "iffy". Google and other search engines take a dim view of link exchanging, and if you have a ton of exchange-program links your site may get red-flagged! We're talking about over one hundred links on a page, here. But a few, select ones may be the ticket. Last chapter, I talked about simply searching for "submit your URL" and other phrases. More often than not, these will be link exchange offers; you submit your link, take their link and post it on your site, they come and check to make sure you're holding up your end of the deal and then post your link on their site.

### *Paid Freelancer Site Promotion*

I've certainly seen it done. Post a job on a freelance board that has a category for site promotion. For example, I see jobs offering a modest sum for anyone who can generate 100 quality links to the buyer's site in a given time frame. While the freelancer who accepts this offer may only use the



same methods I've already detailed here, you might find it advantageous to hire another hand to help out, doing the "dirty work" of promoting your site for you! Anybody with a clue on how to find their way around the Internet is qualified to do as much, so it requires no special knowledge. Operators in European countries with hard-to-pronounce names are standing by!

### *Offer advertising opportunities on your site*

Well, you have the web space, you might as well devote a page to offering ad deals yourself! Make up or pay someone else to design some attractive banner ads. Post them on the page, along with a statement of how much you are willing to pay webmasters to display them. Include a special email address devoted exclusively to discussing deals of this nature. You will want to pick and choose from the offers you get; use Netcraft to verify a site's stats and check up on search engines and other analysis tools to make sure that the site gets the kind of traffic that will be worth your money to advertise on. Check out a legal resource for drawing up a contract stating the terms of the deal. Specify the method of determining payment - either how much time the ad is up, how many clicks you'll pay for, how many viewers you'll need, etc., and nail down the exact payment for each term.

### **Thou shalt be a bookworm!**

Learn all the time; that's the only way to stay current. I've met dozens of Internet laborers who started out with a minor college degree and a website, fully up-to-speed on the latest methods and practices of web platforms. They then proceeded to let themselves go to pot, and ten years later they're hopelessly outdated dinosaurs. There are still web masters out there who swear by Perl scripting, designing in Microsoft Front Page Express, having a metric ton of animated .gif images bogging their server down, and using nothing but HTML tables to format their site! These websites exist today as

crawling horrors of the Internet. Do yourself a huge favor and keep your site updated, and keep current with modern web industry methods. Letting your site go five years without updating your practices is the equivalent of running around in bell-bottom pants, tie-dye shirts, and a funky afro.

Once upon a time all I needed to know was basic HTML and a smidgen of Javascript. Then I had to pick up Perl and SQL databases. Then I took a great leap and got familiar with CSS and PHP, and beefed up my web knowledge with Apache and MySQL. But even now, I'm not ahead of the race; I've been cramming on the AJAX platform, which is becoming more standard, and I'm designing now with an eye towards embedded browsers running on cell phones and portable game consoles. Once upon a time I only concerned myself with Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator; these days I have to check my page on Internet Explorer 7, Firefox, Safari, Opera, Epiphany, Mozilla, Flock, Konqueror, Dillo, and a host of others.

Times change, and we have to change with them. I love all the latest and greatest techie stuff that I have to play with today, but I'm realistic enough not to fall in love with it; the cool technologies I work with today will be aging in five years and dead in ten. I accept that, and am always prepared to adopt the next change.

### **Thou shalt expand thy market**

Adding at least a few new revenue streams per year will help you stay profitable. Especially true in a niche market, where "market saturation" is a constant threat. When everybody who wants one of your products has one, the market is saturated, and the only way to make any more revenue is to improve on your current product, or add a new product to your line.

So, for the product-focused revenue stream, this will mean adding a new item regularly. For the content/ad-focused site, this will mean constantly adding new content.

This is pretty basic marketing stuff, after all. You only need to look at the big players such as Google, Yahoo, Microsoft, and Sun to see that a year doesn't go by without their offering a batch of new products and services. Google is a research playground who is constantly innovating. Yahoo is an ever-expanding portal which updates their services to keep their user base coming back. Microsoft aggressively chases every new market, and while they eat some mud because they never innovate and only copy, they have such deep pockets that they can usually force their way into a market, given the time.

Sun Microsystems - remember them? Well, they were once stuck in 1995 with their Sparc workstation platform and a few software products, plus the Java language shackled in so much licensing that it was almost smothered. Sun has been declared dead countless times, but in the 21st century, they have been reborn. Now they have revamped Java and licensed it as open source, ported their Solaris platform to the Intel/AMD/IBM platform, contributed to the Open Office suite as a serious contender to Microsoft Office, and made darned sure that Apache runs on Solaris. As a result, they've been cited recently as a serious contender to steal both the server from Linux and the desktop from Microsoft! Amongst computer professionals, the mention of Sun today provokes excited debate, where it should have been dismissed as a dinosaur from ages past. Their profits have been doubling each quarter. Nobody is saying Sun is dead today!

Promoting Your Niche Websites

Promotion is one of the most important aspects of marketing an Internet website. It is through promotion that websites reach the targeted audience. Promoting a website can be done in a number of ways. One of the most popular methods for promoting a website is through optimizing the website to achieve high search engine rankings. Another form of promoting a website is by interspersing website links with insightful comments on industry forums. Inbound links are yet another form of niche website promotion. This form of self promotion has the added benefit of contributing to one of the other forms of promotion by resulting in higher search engine rankings. This section of this ebook will examine these three methods of promoting a niche website.

### Using High Search Engine Rankings to Promote a Niche Website

Optimizing a niche website for particular keywords can be one method of promoting the website. Careful optimization can result in high search engine rankings which act as a form of free publicity. Internet users rely on search engines to provide them with the most relevant content for the search terms they use. Therefore, if your website ranks well in search engines your traffic will likely increase.

Search engine optimization (SEO) is serious business which is often best left to the professionals. Many savvy Internet marketers realize the importance of search engine rankings and are willing to invest in having their websites professionally optimized. Although this is an added expense it is worthwhile especially when you are fighting for rankings and an audience in a very competitive niche.

## Promoting Websites through Industry Forums

Forums or message boards are online communities where like minded individuals or those who share a common interest come together to discuss the issues related to their common interest. Participation in these forums is one way website owners can promote their own niche websites. The key to promoting a website while participating in an online forum is to include a link to your niche website in your signature. The other part of the equation is contributing worthwhile information in your posts to give other users a reason to want to click on your links.

Care should be taken to avoid spamming these message boards with your link. Examples would include posting often without adding anything relevant to the conversation and including your link. Other forms of spam may include posting your link in a manner which is perceived as inappropriate by other users. An example of this type of use would be posting your link in response to a question when visiting your website would not assist the user in finding an answer to his question.

## Using Inbound Links to Promote Niche Websites

Inbound links are another method of promoting a niche website. An inbound link is a link from one website which directs visitors to another website. Inbound links can be either reciprocal or non-reciprocal in nature. A reciprocal inbound link is one where one website posts a link to another website and in return the other website posts a link back to the first website. Both types of links are looked on favorably by search engines although non-reciprocal links are often given a slight advantage.

These inbound links can be an effective component of a strategy to promote a niche website. Visitors to websites who provide a link to your website are given the opportunity to enter your website. We have already discussed how search engine rankings can be part of website promotion but inbound links essentially rely on the popularity and high search engine rankings of other websites to promote their own niche website.

In negotiating deals for inbound links, website owners should look for other websites which complement their own website and have a similar audience. For example a website selling novelty basketballs might look for websites which sell basketball hoops. Caution should also be used to avoid link farms which do not offer significantly promotional value to a niche website. A link farm is a website which offers nothing more than a list of links to other websites. While these types of links may not be harmful to a website they are also not likely to be beneficial either.

### **...and in closing:**

Here we are at the end. Congratulations, niche marketer, if you have followed the advice in this book and thrived in your market segments. You have not only done what many fail at, but by diversifying the market, you have provided more choice to consumers and thus have done a service to mankind! You have created a haven for the passionate minority who favors the tastes of the exotic. You have taken the road less traveled and found your own unique way to prosper.