

Frequently Asked Questions about Web writing and making money online

Web writing is a lot of fun, and it's very exciting, as you gain clients, and make money with your own sites and blogs. Some of these Frequently Asked Questions come from [Sell Your Writing Online NOW \(SYWON\)](#) subscribers, others from readers of my various sites and blogs. If you have a question, please ask.

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Web writing: making your payment terms crystal clear

I've had several questions about payment terms for your writing this month, so here's my response.

Firstly, have you created a Terms of Service (TOS) document? You send the TOS to your buyer as soon as he accepts your quote, along with an invoice for your retainer.

A TOS document is the foundation of your interaction with any client. It outlines your terms in regard to payments, revisions, when the copyright transfers to the buyer, and it also indemnifies you against any legal problems a buyer may have.

(If you're a [Sell Your Writing Online NOW \(SYWON\)](#) member, you can get a sample TOS copy which you can modify to make your own. Just contact Julia.)

Make sure that your TOS outlines your up-front payment policy: that is, you require a retainer.

A retainer is vital, because it separates the tyre-kickers from the people who are genuine buyers. You have no way of gauging the legitimacy or otherwise of a buyer until he pays you.

If a buyer can't see paying a retainer from your point of view, you don't need him. There are few things sadder than a message from a writer which goes something like this: "I worked on a project for [buyer's name] for three weeks. He said he would pay me on [date]. But it's been [3/4/5 months] and I haven't received payment."

Unfortunately, because there are so many people calling themselves "writers" these days, some buyers have become skittish, and resist paying a retainer. That's too bad, but remember that this is their problem, not yours.

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Please don't fall for any sob stories about how many times a buyer has been conned by "writers", and that therefore they only pay after you've completed the project.

A buyer's problems have nothing to do with you. Your policy is that you charge a retainer, and you ensure that you have the retainer in hand before you start writing.

Make your payment terms crystal clear. Genuine buyers appreciate it, and it eliminates problems.

You'll find that the "we don't pay up front" buyers change their tune if you're polite and professional in explaining your TOS. The ones which don't, aren't genuine. Wish them well, and say good-bye.

I'm confused about marketing my writing: how do I start?

Marketing is essential for your writing success. It's a vital part of [Sell Your Writing Online NOW \(SYWON\)](#).

I just wrote a blog post on the SYWON blog, "[Create marketing plans for writing success](#)", in which I wrote:

What's the secret to writing success? Two words: marketing plans. I create marketing plans for different products each month. For example, one of my marketing plans for April is to promote Fab Freelance Writing Ezine. Why create marketing plans? 1. They're essential because they work -- they make sales 2. They stop procrastination 3. They allow you to track what's happening with your writing.

Read the entire post; I hope Stan's story inspires you. :-)

If you're a SYWON subscriber, and you're not sure about just how to create a marketing plan, contact me. Either Julia or I will walk you through the process.

I need to make an income fast... What's the easiest way to get results?

The more you do, the better your results. When you're first starting out as a Web writer, you're starting from zero. So you need to hit the ground running. There's a mile of information in each and every lesson on what to do -- just do it, and then do it again, and again.

For example, if you're using [Craigslist](#), then add fresh ads several times a week. You can add as many ads as you like, but every ad must be different. Once you have 40 to 50 ads running, you'll get around five new enquiries a day.

If you're blogging, blog once a day for the first month, so that you get traction.

[Sell Your Writing Online NOW \(SYWON\)](#) shows you exactly what to do; just do it, and you'll get results.

Once time, your results will increase dramatically, because you have more information about YOU online. As stated, remember that when you're starting out, you're starting from nothing. SYWON kick starts your efforts, with free links to your first sites, so that's a huge benefit.

I've heard that some Sell Your Writing Online NOW (SYWON) lessons come with money-making products and sites we can sell - is that right?

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Yes, it certainly is. From around Lesson 20, each week you'll receive a bonus product you can SELL – an ebook, a script, or set of videos. **The resale rights are clearly shown** – so look for them. Many of these products include a complete Web site too...

Just upload the site, and sell the products. Just another benefit of being a [Sell Your Writing Online NOW \(SYWON\)](#) subscriber. :-)

Can I really make \$250 an hour at the end of the SYWON training?

New writers sometimes query the "\$250 per hour" claim of [Sell Your Writing Online NOW \(SYWON\)](#), wondering if it's possible. Experienced writers know that that estimate is on the conservative side.

For example, I'm sure you can write a Web page of 200 words in half an hour or so. I can do it in 20 minutes. Therefore, since an average price for a Web page is \$200 to \$300 dollars, you can see that this estimate "\$250 per hour" is indeed conservative.

SYWON training consists of modules – article writing, creating ebooks, creating your own sites and blogs etc, and any of these modules can give you a six-figure income, if you USE the information.

You don't need to complete a lesson a week, you can take as long as you like. All the training works together.

My goal for the training is that you'll have a great set of tools for life, which will help you to develop the writing career – and the writing business – that you dream of.

Dream BIG. :-)

Which outsourcing sites do you recommend?

There are many outsourcing sites. I don't have experience with them all, and I don't specifically recommend any particular site.

In mid-2008, I'm using three sites as a buyer of services:

[Odesk](#)

[Elance](#)

[Get a Freelancer](#)

From discussions with students, all three sites work well for service providers. So give all three a try, and then focus on the one which is easiest to use from your perspective.

We discuss the outsourcing sites and how to win bids in Lesson 2 of [Sell Your Writing Online NOW \(SYWON\)](#). However, bidding on projects is not the best way to make money online – get your own site.

What's important when I bid on projects at the outsourcing sites?

I've just posted some projects at the outsourcing sites for a client, and have started receiving bids. So with the frustrating experience fresh in my mind, here are some things to remember:

1. Follow the rules the buyer has made. For example, in my project descriptions, I asked for samples in TEXT format only, not MS Word. I use a Mac as my primary work machine, and MS Word is a resource hog, so I rarely use it. To date 9 out of 10 bidders have posted MS Word files. Of course, I won't hire these writers, because they've shown they can't follow directions.

A tip when you're converting MS Word to text – don't copy and paste, because this leaves artifacts in the files which need to be removed. Use "File Save As... Text". Better still, use a text editor. NoteTab Lite (Google it) is completely free, and it's a must-have if you use a PC.

2. Watch your spelling. Half the bidders on the projects I posted had atrocious spelling. Why on earth would anyone hire them when they can't use a spell checker?

So these two things are vital – **follow the directions exactly as posted, and use a spell checker.** They're simple points, but are absolutely vital.

You'll notice too, that these points have nothing to do with writing skill.

What are the best FREE keyword tools online?

Here are my current free favorites:

* [Google AdWords External Keyword Tool](#)

* [Free keywords tool from WordTracker](#)

However, there are many keyword tools online, both free and commercial. As your Web writing business grows, you'll want to invest in the best keyword tools you can afford.

What are the best free HTML editors I can use?

My current favorite free Web editor is [Yola](#). You received a step by step PDF on creating your first SynthaSite site with your SYWON materials.

I also like the new [Google Sites](#) tool.

[Weebly](#) is great too.

If you're using headers and graphics you've received as part of your Sell Your Writing Online NOW (SYWON) bonus materials, use [NVU](#). Not only is it completely free, it comes with lots of tutorials.

Should I be charging for consultations?

Yes, you should. In [Sell Your Writing Online NOW \(SYWON\)](#), many lessons cover creating Web sites for specific purposes, including selling your writing services in various ways.

Once your writing services Web site is online, you'll get loads of email queries every single day.

While it's great that people are interested in your services, many/ most of these queries are a huge waste of your time.

There's no way you can run a profitable writing services business and hand out free information day after day.

So, what do you do? You can't ignore these queries, can you?

No, you can't ignore them all, but you can qualify these prospects. Every business qualifies its prospects, so it's something you must learn how to do too.

Here's how.

1. Create a Web form so prospects can brief you

This is the first step. Create a reasonably detailed online form, so your prospects can tell you more about their needs. As you can see from the form on my [Hot Web Copy](#) site, it's detailed, but not overwhelming. If someone is serious about hiring you, they're happy to brief you.

Once your form's created, every email query is answered automatically with a link to this form. (Check your email program's Help files to see how to send auto replies.)

You'll never hear from 95 per cent of the people you send to this form, and that's fine. If they're too lazy to fill in a form, they're not going to hire you, and you've just saved hours of time.

2. Consultations: Yes, you can charge for the time you spend answering questions

You'll get plenty of work from the clients who fill in your form.

However, some prospects will need more hand-holding. They're not sure quite what they want, or they don't know what to do.

You'll get lots of these people, and they can eat up lots of time.

For example, let's say someone has heard about article marketing, and wants you to write some articles for them. However, they have no idea of WHY article marketing is effective, and what keywords are, etc.

This is where you can either spend time and energy and not get paid, or decide that your time is worth money, and so is the information you provide: charge for consultations.

Here's one of my [Consultation](#) pages.

Will people balk at this? Occasionally, yes. But please realize that the people who balk at it have no intention of paying you for anything ever, they just want to pick your brain, so don't worry about it.

How do I add a PayPal "Buy Now" button to a page?

Adding Buy Now buttons is really easy.

You just copy and paste a snippet of code from PayPal.

Here's a [tutorial](#) you can download, which will help.

"Eeek! I'm falling behind in my lessons..."

If you're finding it hard to complete your [SYWON](#) assignment each week, relax.

Take your time. Look on the course as material you'll be working with for many years to come. You'll find that everything works together: you're creating a profitable full time career word by word, and action by action. Just keep taking action, and you can't go wrong.

Lesson 53 -- and beyond

Your [Sell Your Writing Online NOW \(SYWON\)](#) lessons end at Lesson 52, if you wish.

Then, you have two options.

The first is just to unsubscribe. Just go to your PayPal account, and in your payments history, look for "Subscriptions", and find your SYWON subscription, and hit the Cancel link.

Although you've unsubscribed, you can nevertheless still contact me on anything to do with Web writing -- you're never alone. :-)

Want to continue.. with personal coaching?

However, if you'd like to continue with Sell Your Writing Online NOW (SYWON) training, your subscription becomes personal Web writing coaching.

As a SYWON graduate, your monthly personal coaching sessions include:

- * Up to three questions a month, answered by me via email
- * Half an hour with me via IM or Skype, or via email.

This is a \$150 value: [consultations](#) are \$300 an hour.

With me as your personal coach, you can get direct help from me on ANYTHING to do with Web writing. You may want to discuss creating marketing plans; setting up a Web site; a customer challenge you're experiencing; an ebook or other material you're stuck on... anything at all related to Web writing and doing business.

In addition, I'll be sending you bonus material, usually monthly, although I'll send bonuses out more frequently whenever I find something that you, as a SYWON graduate, will find useful.

Enjoy SYWON. :-)

Should I share my "niche" sites with others?

Please don't share the URLs of your niche sites with anyone at all – not even friends and family, especially if you're using Google AdSense. This is because friends may decide to "help" you by clicking on links, and this will get you banned completely from AdSense, and from many other Cost Per Action advertising formats.

There are other reasons you shouldn't share your URLs; the primary one being competition.

So, PLEASE never share your URLs, especially on forums etc. You may say what niche you're targeting, but the fewer people who know you who know the exact URLs the better... if that makes sense. :-)

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