

# Original Content

By Bob Osgoodby

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So you've listened to the advice, and you're going to start your own publication. Obviously, you must have some writing ability, or collaborate with someone who does, and you must be knowledgeable in the areas you will cover in your ezine.

One of the biggest mistakes a fledgling publisher can make is to focus their publication on something they don't know much about. While it is possible to get content from contributing authors, which does add a great deal to your publication, if you are to succeed, you must have original content.

Many people can write an occasional article that is excellent. Writing an article or column however on a regular basis, is a demanding task.

The hardest thing is to get ideas for articles. It seems that once you do get an idea, the article then flows rather easily.

So, where do you get the ideas?

Actually ideas can come from anyplace. Many come from questions your readers might ask. Sometimes a simple question can blossom into a full blown article. Email you receive, even spam, can contain a keyword that sets your creative juices flowing.

Browsing the web is a great place. Discussion sites, where people are talking about something might give you an idea. Many times people get into rather heated discussions and the controversy itself might breed an idea.

Articles by other authors can stimulate your thinking, but you have to be careful here. While we all know you can't take another's work and claim it as your own, you also can't take their idea and simply rewrite it a bit. There is a gray area here, and sometimes you may be taken to task even if you have never seen their work.

One great source of ideas is articles that are out of date. Many people, for example have written on the subject of how to submit your web site to the search engines to get a high ranking. Conditions change so rapidly in this regard, an article could be written several times a year on this subject

alone. What was true just a few short months ago may not be today.

The web is a dynamic place that is constantly changing. Not a day goes by that there is something in the newspaper that could spark an idea. Just this week I read an article about discount web sites for airline tickets. Another article talked about the disparity between urban and rural areas for web access. Still another compared the number of minority households that had computers - and yet another talked about the "Spanish Market".

The ideas are there, and if you keep a log of them, the next time you sit down to write one, you should have a never ending supply. If you get an idea, simply write down the title of the prospective article.

Many times, as the article develops, the original title may not be appropriate. But, even if you do change the title for your current article, keep the old one. Who knows - a year from now it may light another spark.

A search of the web on quotes is a fertile place to look. "Power Quotes" by Kevin Eikenberry - <http://powerquotes.net> - has a wealth of information. Dr. Kevin Nunley - <http://drnunley.com> is an idea factory. There are others like these that should be on your required reading list.

When doing research for the current article you are writing, the web is a fertile place to look. Always keep a paper and pencil handy, and if you get an idea write it down. Keep that same pad and pencil next to your bed. If you get an idea, don't trust your memory to write it down in the morning.

Surprisingly, when I started this article it was going to be about advertising, but after the first paragraph, I found myself writing something far different. Guess that will have to wait for another time.

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