

How to Start an eZine

By Craig Lilienthal

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How to Start an eZine.
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After you decide that you would like to publish an eZine, the first thing you must do is choose a topic. Your eZine should cover a topic or subject area that makes you happy. I'm not saying that it should make you want to jump for joy or anything; I'm simply suggesting that you focus mainly on a subject you will enjoy learning more and talking about. As with any endeavor in life, if you write about something that you enjoy doing, it's more likely that you will achieve long term success.

Your topic can be on the broad end of the spectrum and should, like I said, relate to something you already know about or something that you would like to learn more about. However, you should stay away from topics that are too broad or too narrow. You want your topic to be broad enough to attract enough readers to justify you spending time maintaining the newsletter and you want it to be narrow enough to allow you to identify the demographics (e.g., age, occupation, interests, etc.) of your audience. If your topic is too narrow you may not have an audience that is worthwhile, in terms of size, and you will be limited in terms of content. Alternatively, if your topic is too broad you will have difficulty identifying your target market's preferences and your newsletter will end up losing its appeal to readers and potential advertisers.

"Software" is an example of a topic that is too broad. "MineSweeper" is an example of a topic that is too narrow. There are just too many kinds of "Software" out there to cover and MineSweeper would attract very few people (I think!). If you narrow "Software" down a bit to let's say "PhotoShop," you'd be moving in the right direction. Hmm.. "PhotoShop Tips & Shortcuts" sounds like a winner!

Now that you have a general idea about what your eZine will focus on, it's time to do some research. You will need to find out more about existing eZines that cover your topic. If you subscribe to every eZine that you come across that relates to your topic, you'll gain a multitude of valuable information regarding your competition, ways to format your newsletter, and article subject ideas for your first publication. While in the research phase, be sure to write down, or bookmark, where you subscribed to each eZine because this information will be very helpful when it becomes time to begin promoting for yourself. Below are three excellent resources that will get you started.

<http://www.marketing-seek.com/>
<http://ezinehub.com/>

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

In addition to subscribing to every eZine that you can find covering your topic, you should join related discussion groups and forums to get a better idea of what it is that your potential readers are interested in learning more about. After all, it is the readers that you're trying to appeal to. Below are a couple of forums to check out.

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

<http://groups.yahoo.com/>

If you can consistently deliver cutting-edge up-to-date content that appeals to the majority of your reader base in conjunction with effective promotion, your eZine is sure to be a success. Now that you know where to start, you should begin putting your ideas on paper while your brain is still "warmed up." There's no time like the present!

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Craig Lilienthal is the founder of the TheRealURL Newsletter and TheRealURL.com website where intelligent businesses have their websites hosted.

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