

# Climbing The Internet Kilimanjaro

By Ante Miljak

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If you stretch your imagination a little you might be able to picture St. Peter, sleeves rolled up, still processing the millions of poor souls that were liberated by KGB thugs. Tortured to death, multitudes revealed their innermost thoughts.

Duly recorded, these secrets now lie buried under layers of dust in some obscure archives, so as not to remind us of the savagery perpetrated by Homo sapiens ("Wise Man", according to Linnaeus - a dubious accolade to say the least).

But times have changed. Today you don't have to use coercion to lay your hands on the most amazing money making secrets. At least I don't. I get them for free. Some mornings my inbox contains so many of them that I am tempted to contact the people at Dzerzhinsky Square and set up some kind of secrets exchange.

It would be a win-win arrangement.

My secrets would enable them to improve their somewhat reduced circumstances, and make money the way they always have - without any work or investment. Their experience in disseminating misinformation might be the missing link needed to make money from these "sure-fire" schemes, where I failed so miserably.

On the other hand I could use my literary prowess to expose the deep buried secrets in an all revealing e-book and make my fortune. The real Africa, or the pockets of it that still remain, would then lie before the wheels of my four-wheel-drive vehicle. I could savour the magnificent vistas of the "dark continent" before they too are "enlightened" and turned into sprawling slums by the "civilized".

Call me old-fashioned, but I still prefer the original works of nature.

What holds me back from making the call to Moscow is the possibility that even the devious KGB might not be able to make the promised millions and knock on my door at their favourite time - the early hours of the morning. My experience with these amazing money-making secrets made a dawn knock on my door very probable.

I should have known that things are not always what they seem. Climbing Kilimanjaro taught me that lesson, but as Benjamin Franklin said: "Experience is a dear teacher, but fools will learn at no other." It is hard to admit, but I seem to be one of them.

When I saw the snow-topped mountain from the dusty street of the equatorial town of Moshi, it looked majestic, but not at all challenging. To climb Kilimanjaro would be a piece of cake. Or so I thought.

Over the next few days the highest freestanding mountain in the world, (5895 m) taught me that experience is a painful bridge between perception and reality.

The excitement of the climb through the lush rain forest on the lower slopes of the mountain could be best compared to that of an Internet novice seeing the profusion of incredible opportunities offered on the Internet.

Once you part with some cash and realize that the miracle product you just downloaded isn't that miraculous, your exuberance ends abruptly and you realize that you have to weed out the Internet hype to clear your way to the real thing.

This is what happens on the second day of the trek up the mountain. The rain forest ends just as abruptly and you realize that this piece of cake might not be as palatable as you originally envisaged. With subdued spirits you negotiate the mild slopes covered by low shrub. Your optimism is still reasonably high.

The trouble starts when you approach the top. Low shrub changes to semi-desert and then desert. The lack of oxygen makes the journey an arduous one. By the time you drag yourself into Kibo Hut, the last stop before summit, you seriously contemplate giving up.

Huddled behind a rock or hut wall to shield themselves from the icy wind and gasping for air, seasoned Web marketers would probably reflect on the early Internet days when disappointment after disappointment sapped their energy and enthusiasm.

After a few hours of restless sleep, you set off for the summit at midnight. The scintillating dome of the unpolluted African sky seems within easier reach than the out-of-sight top of the mountain.

Your breath is short and your step even shorter. The further you go, the shorter you breath and the slower your step. The urge to turn back ingrains itself in your mind.

You have to fight your mind and your body to make one more step. Those that cannot see their objective in their mind's eye don't make it.

Starved of oxygen, your brain struggles to rationalize the logic that with each laborious pace you are a step closer to the summit. If it succeeds you reach the top just before sunrise.

The kaleidoscope of color on the horizon of the magnificent African plain and the knowledge that you didn't give up recharges your soul. Even the lack of oxygen cannot dampen the incredible feeling of triumph that standing on the top of the highest mountain in Africa produces.

You don't even contemplate the consequences of the failure to reach the top. You don't think of the barrier that the loss of confidence in yourself would have created on your road to success.

The climb to the top of the Internet gets tough and at times you will want to give up. Don't. If you do you will never experience triumph. Your dreams will always remain just that - dreams.

Remember, you will only turn them into reality if you persevere. The kaleidoscope of your life will be as magnificent as the sky over Kilimanjaro, decorated by the rays of the rising sun.

Do not give it up!!!

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