

Using Public Domain Material For Profit

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How To Profit From Public Domain Material

I receive many emails and calls asking about Public Domain and how can UK people use it. I use Public Domain in my business every week and as of now I have 24 Public Domain websites published and bringing in a POSITIVE NET PROFIT each month. So without further a do, let's move on and see how you can use Public Domain to build your own business.

What Products Can Be 'in' The Public Domain?

Most people think of books, however, out of copyright can also apply to music, film and software to name a few.

As books are the most popular public domain option we'll look at how you can take a book, resell it and keep 100% of the profits..... legitimately.

First things first, copyright varies from country to country and years to years so it would be impossible to cover every eventuality here.

Second, I am not a lawyer – nor do I pretend to be one – so this is NOT legal advice. If you are in any doubt please seek your own legal counsel.

That said, public domain material offers a vast opportunity for you to produce profits in your business. As an introduction to public domain we'll stick with the easiest way you can profit from it.

The UK copyright law states that copyright exists on books for the lifetime of the author plus 70 years after death. This is quite hard to track and requires a fair amount of research so as you can guess it's not my favourite way to use Public Domain.

Ladies and Gentlemen let me introduce our American cousins.....

Any book published in the USA before 1923 is in the public domain and freely available for you to use as you wish.

Now, before you think if it's that old it must be out of date, let me point out that in many cases what was relevant then is still relevant and useable today.

I've sold recipe books from pre 1923, books on horses and several hobby and business subjects. In fact a friend of mine, Peter Woodhead, sells a collection of old and very rare marketing books taken from the public domain that teach strategy and tactics you can use in today's business environment.

Have a look at www.longlostmarketingsecrets.com

So what books should you acquire to sell in your business?

Last month we looked at how you research a niche and the processes I use, I recommend you go back and have a read through it again.

Once you've found your niche you'll want to have a look for a book that is in the Public Domain you can use.

The first place I always visit is www.alibris.com. This is an online bookstore that also sells second hand / old books through a variety of bookstores across the world.

Remembering for this example we're looking for a book that was published in the USA before 1923.

To start with click on 'books' under the advanced search box on the left of the site and you'll be taken to a page where you can enter more search details.

Here's what I do; I search under 'subject' for the niche I'm looking at and enter 1923 in the 'before' box; this will ensure the results will only contain books published prior to 1923.

Once the results have been returned I then work down the list looking for a book that I 'feel' is most suited to my niche and what I'm looking to sell.

The only downside is that a lot of the book descriptions are relevant to the condition of the book and not what the book covers so you'll have to use your own judgement in many cases.

The positive is that most of the books start from a few of dollars upwards, therefore I usually buy a couple and choose the best when it arrives.

Here's an example:

If I search "golf" before 1923 Alibris returns a number of results with books starting from \$2.95. Once you've chosen your books click on checkout and finish the ordering process.

At this point you can relax and wait for the books to arrive.

When the books arrive I recommend you go through and read them to see which ones will appeal to your niche market best. You may find that they are all relevant and if so you have several books to sell!

Once you've chosen your book the next step is to turn it into an electronic document you can edit before you turn it into a PDF to sell.

Here are the options available to you:

- Type it out yourself (not recommended!)
- Have someone type it for you
- Scan it yourself
- Use a scanning firm

I've had a book typed for me (Mother in laws come in handy every now and then!) although I do use a scanning firm for most of my Public Domain books.

The only problem with a scanning firm is that in most cases they will have to cut the book from it's spine to enable them to scan the pages.

If you are not a book lover then this won't be a problem, however, there are a number of books that I want to keep and it's these that I have typed.

Once the books are in electronic format you can then edit as you see fit. I don't do much editing with the books I sell although I do add a forward to each book that I offer.

This serves 2 purposes

- It acts as an introduction to the book
- I can add my copyright to the forward page

You can't simply take a public domain book and copyright it without making any significant changes, however, you should take steps to warn people off simply taking your book and reselling it.

Adding in a forward or additional pages 'personalises' the work to you, therefore, if someone else wanted to sell your book they'd have to go through and 'strip' out your additional pages so it returns to its original format.

After you have added in your forward page and any additional information, have the word document turned into a PDF file and you're ready to upload it to the web for selling.

Of course you'll require a website. A single 1 page sales letter is all you need to sell a Public Domain eBook coupled with a download page that your customers will be directed to once their credit card has been processed.

For my eBooks that I sell worldwide I use clickbank (www.clickbank.com) to process credit card payments. Although they do charge 7.5% and \$1 per sale it is still very worth while as it's easy to set up and monitor. They have a one off set up charge of \$49.95.

Once you have your book and site set up you can start driving people to your website using Google AdWords (www.google.com). The simplest, quickest and easiest way to drive qualified traffic to your website.

As this first site starts producing sales you should be on with setting up a second, then a third and so on!

Plus I recommend you set up a follow up process to your ebook buyers that offers additional products that are either your own or affiliate products to bring in further profits for you.

This has been a world wind tour on how to use public domain and I've only just scratched the surface.

As well as using books published before 1923 in the USA you can also use books published in the USA between 1923 and 1963 as long as their copyright wasn't renewed in the 27th year. Research shows that 85% of books in the USA, within this time frame, haven't had their copyright renewed.

The opportunities are endless and we'll cover more later in this report.

Additional Ideas

As well as using public domain works for ebooks you can also use the information to create additional products and derivative works such as: -

- Hard copy books
- Manuals
- EClasses
- Audio tapes and CD's
- DVD's
- Membership sites
- Book of the month style sites
- And more

Here's a small list of sites using public domain information.

www.secretsofchinesecooking.com

www.houseplantsecrets.com

www.farmerburns.com

www.scienceofgettingrich.net

Public Domain Niche Research

Coming up with a product idea is surprisingly what I find many people struggle with. Not only coming up with an idea, but a good, viable and most importantly...profitable idea.

With this in mind, here are the steps I take when brainstorming an idea and the process I go through to check to see if I should pursue it or not.

Do you have to do every step I do?

No of course not, but this is what I've found that reduces my risk of failure and increases my success rate dramatically.

Step 1 – Coming up with the idea itself

This step is probably the least qualitative of the whole process as it can't be measured specifically.

What I mean is, at this stage I use my own personal radar and gut feel.

But what drives this?

During everyday life I am always on the lookout and listening for ideas. It may be something I hear on the radio, read in the papers or catch part of a conversation of friends or passers by.

For example, I have a friend whose hobby is valve radios, I know of another guy who is really into battle re-enactments from way back in time! Each time I hear things like this I make a mental note or preferably write it down for later use. If you don't have your own ideas pad or notebook I suggest you get one now!

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Here's another example of a business I've started from hearing and reading snippets about it....I'm sorry I'm not going to give the exact details as we're just about to launch it.

As you may know my background was in banking, not working in a branch but various functions within the banks organisation itself.

A few months back I read in the paper about a certain topic I had past experience in and it described what people in this sector lacked. Now along side this I also read in USA Today and the Wall Street Journal (online) articles of a similar nature.

Well, that got my mind working.....'was there a potential product here' and there was!

That's just one idea.

I often visit book and magazine shops to look at the titles on display to see if anything sparks an interest. In fact I always buy a couple of magazines a month on topics that I have no interest in previously. I do this for two reasons: -

- To expand my own knowledge
- To see what product opportunities there may be in areas outside of my own comfort zone.

I did get funny looks at home from my wife when I brought home a cross stitch magazine.....since I've never sewed in my life!

When using magazines for research I also have a look to see what adverts are running. Do they have web addresses, what type of adverts are they; does the target market have a credit card?

The credit card question is very important....for obvious reasons!

There are two schools of thought when researching topics for your business: -

- Pick a topic you are passionate about
- Pick a topic where you can make a profit whether you like it or not.

I like to use a bit of both, however, I do choose topics I have an interest in or wouldn't mind finding out more about.

For example, metal detecting or treasure hunting is a popular topic but I don't have an interest in it so I wouldn't pursue it. Where as, sailing and learning to sail really appeals to me and is in my ideas book.

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I hope this has given you some ideas as to how I generate my product ideas....always, always have your idea radar on!

Step 2 – Validating the potential of your idea

Once I have my idea I now want to see if it has profit potential. EG will enough people actually buy something online related to the topic?

The important word here is ‘enough’.

It’s no use having a tremendous killer idea only to find that 5 people a month search for information or products about this topic.

Here’s what I do.

I first of all visit Google's Free Keyword Tool and type in keywords that will be used to search for information about my idea.

Google will then return the number of searches for those (and related) keywords in the previous month and the monthly average for the last 12 months. Google gives an idea of how many people typed in words relating to your topic across its network. This is not a definitive list but gives you a very good idea and feel for your topic.

Now, here’s where many people differ as to what’s a good market.

I look for a minimum of 25,000 searches for me to continue researching this topic.

Other people look for a minimum of 30,000 and others a minimum of 40,000.

That said, I have a product that sells very well into a market that showed a search result of only 11,000 searches in one month. I actually knew this market VERY well and the product I sell into it is a high end product, therefore I don't have to sell many to make a profit.

However, when starting off use one of the minimum measures above to give you a fighting chance.

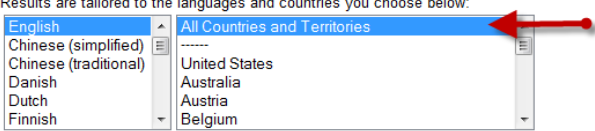
Now, what do you do if you see 100’s of thousands of searches for your topic? Don’t get too excited!

More than 100,000 searches says to me that you haven’t been specific enough about your topic. For example, you may have put in dog training that returns a lot of searches, where as if you put in Poodle training the results are lower but your topic is more refined and specific.

Have a play round searching different ideas.

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Results are tailored to the languages and countries you choose below:



Choose columns to display: [?](#)
Show/hide columns

Keywords	Advertiser Competition ?	Local Search Volume: June ?	Global Monthly Search Volume ?
Keywords related to term(s) entered - sort by relevance ?			
sailing	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	6,120,000	4,090,000
sailing boats	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	823,000	673,000
sails	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	673,000	550,000
sailing accessories	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	368,000	246,000
sailing boating	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	301,000	201,000
sailing dinghies	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	301,000	201,000
sailing boat	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	246,000	165,000

Looking at the image above and using the market I discussed previously – sailing, there was an incredible 6 million searches performed in google in the month of June for the word sailing. Do you think this market has potential? If you look further down the list you can begin to see how you could drill down. E.g. Sailing boats, sails, sailing accessories and sailing dinghies each search term getting over 300,000 searches a month.

Search phrases such as sailing accessories shows commercial intent which means people willing to spend money. But the biggest indication to me that this is a commercially viable market is the boxes in green to the right of the search term. This is googles way of telling us that people are advertising via adwords.

Google.com

I then go to Google.com to investigate the adwords advertisements. AdWords ads are the classified adverts that appear above and to the right of the main search results.

Enter your top search phrase into googles search box in my case sailing and if there are more than 5 ads then it demonstrates that this market responds to sales adverts. Have a look at a few of the sites advertising to see what type of products are being offered and at what prices.

Step 3 – I survey the market using Google AdWords

There are 2 ways I do this: -

- 1) I place an AdWords advert on Google that drives people to a web page where I ask them a question or questions about what they'd like to know about the topic; or if they would buy a product about

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this subject and what price they'd be prepared to pay. I use a service such as SurveyMonkey.com or Askdatabase.com.

- 2) I go to Amazon.com and search for books on the topic I'm researching. I then choose a popular one to promote. Using my Amazon affiliate link (signing up to be an Amazon affiliate is easy) I place an advert on Google via AdWords and if people click on the advert it takes them to the Amazon page where the book is.

The idea here is not to make a lot of money selling the book but to see if people are willing to spend money in this market online.

These two processes tell me 3 things: -

- 1) If people click on the advert it tells me people expect to be sold to
- 2) If they leave questions or tell me about the product they'd like it indicates they have a want or desire that requires filling
- 3) If people click on the advert and buy from Amazon it tells me they are hungry for information and are willing to pay for it.

Extra tip –If people buy a book from Amazon without a sales letter imagine what you can sell using a one page sales letter website!

Conclusion

After doing all of the above, and the results are positive, I'd then go onto to create, license or outsource the creation of a product for that market.

Does it sound like a lot of work?

If it does...then great, you'll never be a competitor of mine!

Sorry to sound harsh, but 99% of people won't be willing to do the steps above to make sure their idea has a chance of success.

When I first started out I had more failures than successes, however using the steps above each project I launch has a greater chance of success than ever before.

Go for it!

Repositioning Your Public Domain Content For Profit

You now know how you can profit from using Public Domain material in your own business and how to find your niche.....

*** As a quick recap.....Public Domain material is works that are out of copyright, never been copyrighted or were given by the creator to be freely used and distributed. The latter usually happens with software these days (called open source). ***

In this last segment of using Public Domain we'll take a look at the various ways you can sell your Public Domain material for greater profit!

The easiest way to sell a Public Domain book is to put it on ebay and resell it as is.

I kid you not!

Now, I don't do this myself, however I do know of several people who use ebay to sell public domain books....for good profit margins.

The reason I don't use ebay is that once you've sold the book it's gone and can't be sold again.....unless you find another copy.

I like to profit more than once from my Public Domain books and that's why I recommend you get the book scanned, saved as a word document and then turned into a PDF that you can sell as an eBook over and over and over again.

Selling PDF eBooks is only one way to profit from Public Domain material, there are many other ways you can use the content from the book to create a very profitable income stream.

The following ideas and examples are what I have actually done with Public Domain material, not theory or guesswork, actual products that sell day in and day out.

Audio

This is probably the simplest, quickest and certainly the easiest way to use Public Domain works other than an eBook.

Grab yourself a microphone and read the words into recording equipment and there you have it.....an audio product.

If you don't like the idea of reading the whole book, why not have it done for you. I know of several people with excellent reading voices that will do it for you.....and at very reasonable rates.

I created a 50 minute downloadable audio file about motivational quotes & sayings. I recorded it direct onto my computer and sold it for \$14.97.

I also have another book that was professionally read for me. This sells as a PHYSICAL CD product for \$49.97.

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HINT: I'm looking at my book shelf and the Public Domain books I have, to see what could be an ideal audio product.

The Old Masters Vol. 1 – Published 1918

This book covers paintings and painters; so, how about ‘A Chat On Old Masters’ a CD detailing, describing and discussing the paintings of Monet, Van Gough, Manet, etc?

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Just an idea?

Content Sites

Let me define content sites before we move forward: -

Membership Sites – These are usually where people pay a monthly, quarterly or annual fee to access your website and the content it provides.

I now have 3 membership sites and have used public domain material on 2 of them. In fact one of the membership sites is predominately information I've taken from the Public Domain.

Affiliate Website – Affiliates sites do not sell any products of their own but link off to other websites and earn a commission for each person they refer and/or buys from that site.

Affiliate sites rely on content to get them ranked in the search engines and by using public domain material you cut down on the amount of writing you have to do or your ghost writers fees if you sub contract out your writing.

I have used public domain material on my affiliate sites.

Portal Sites – Portal sites are similar to affiliate sites with a slight twist in that they usually carry advertising in the form of sponsorship of the site or page.

I don't have a portal site, although whilst in Washington in April I did meet a number of people who ran very successful portal sites using Public Domain material.

Courses & Eclasses

Many 'How to' Public Domain books can be 'cut up' into sections and sold either as a course or eclass.

For example, a book on Public Speaking with 10 chapters can be turned into a 10 part course quite easily.

Simply take each chapter, add an introduction, a conclusion; include assignments and you have a ready made course.

An eclass is very similar to a course except that it is delivered via email on a weekly basis.

When your customer signs up for the eclass you use an autoresponder to deliver each part of the class. At the end of each eclass is homework for them to complete and send to you for evaluation.

Eclasses are great, they can be fully automated and it doesn't matter where in the world you are, if homework is sent to you, you simply log on, check your email and respond accordingly!

DVD / Video

I've seen Public Domain material turned into a DVD or Video successfully many times.

Again, taking a 'How to' book you can demonstrate any action using your camcorder and either yourself, friends or hired actors.

I've seen an old wrestling book turned into a DVD that sells for \$300+. The person simply recorded 2 people demonstrating each hold or throw in the book with commentary and how it can be used in competition to full effect.

Here's a list of possible subjects to record: -

- Judo
- Karate
- Flower arranging
- Tying knots
- Fly Fishing
- Ti Chi
- Yoga
- Cross Stitch / needlework
- Golf

The list is virtually endless!

Develop software applications or have them developed for you

If you're not a techie kind of person (and I'm not) then you may switch off here or skip this part....DON'T.

Having software developed is VERY easy today.

You simply go to websites like www.elance.com, www.rentacoder.com or www.scriptlance.com and post a project describing exactly what you want.

Programmers from all over the planet will then bid on your project. I have used programmers in India, Pakistan and the old Soviet Republic!

So, how can you turn Public Domain material into software?

Simple.....

Take any reference book, ask the programmer to build a piece of software that allows you to search for information and then output it into a simple user interface.

For example: -

Say I wanted to know what was the best type of plant to put into a shady part of the garden where the soil was very clayey.

I'd type the question into the software and it would output an answer for me.

The answer would be taken from the information originally contained in the book that the programmer had put into a searchable database that drives the software.

Conclusion

I hope that I've given you a number of ideas of how to use Public Domain material in different, and profitable, ways.

To find out more about Public Domain I recommend you take a look at: -

www.PublicDomainResource.com