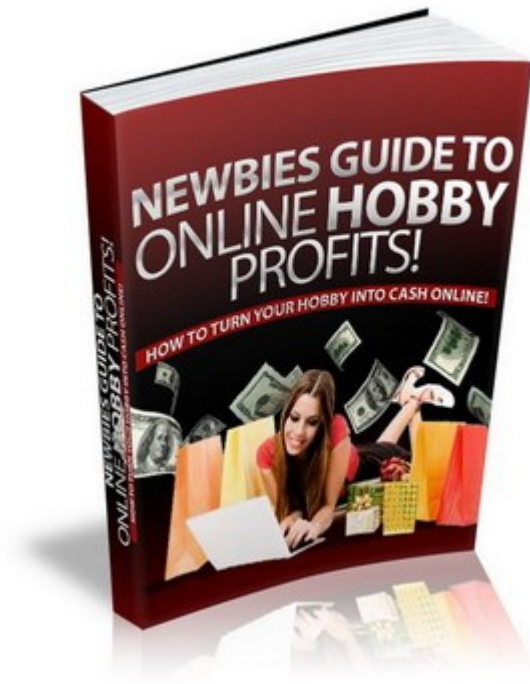


Newbies Guide To Online Hobby Profits



How to turn your hobby into cash online

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Introduction

One of the advantages to blogging about your favourite hobby is that you already have the “passion” and will easily be able to create great content on a regular basis.

Many bloggers pick a niche, they start out with good intentions, but quickly run out of ideas to blog about, this is the not case for the hobby blogger, because you are passionate about your hobby, it is not so hard to find the ideas and topics to blog about.

A common thought is that the crafting and hobby blogs don't make money, they are there only to display someone's love of a particular subject. Well, that really isn't the case, lots of hobby blogs out there are making money, and some of them are making serious money. Wouldn't it be great if instead of your hobby costing you money, you could make money from your hobby.

Funding your hobby can be expensive, so why not use blogging to bring in some extra money to pay for it.

Other enthusiasts are looking for the same as you, that must have tool? Fabric? Wool? Kit? It is clear that there will be others out there who have the same interests and will be scouring the net looking for new ideas, resources, hints and tips or “how to” guidance.

Writing product reviews can be a huge income generator on a hobby blog. When you find that must have “item” that you absolutely love, you can tell people about it on your blog, include an affiliate link to the product.

Unless you have a really weird and not well known hobby like counting the spots on a ladybirds back! (no offence to ladybird spotters!) But as weird as it may sound, even that hobby could be monetised.

So why not blog about your hobby, share your thoughts, ideas and passion with others and make some money at the same time too.

Setting Up Your Blog

In order for your blog to be taken seriously, you should consider hosting it yourself on your own website domain name and hosting. This is really easy to set up and it will set you apart from those who use free services such as blogger.com

One of the things blogger.com doesn't like so much is advertising on their blogs, if you use blogger.com and they dislike your blog, they will disable it and all your hard work will be gone with the click of their mouse.

The best hosting to host a blog is one that has "cpanel" and "fantastico" features, there are so many hosting providers that you will not have any problem finding one that you can afford. For less than \$5 a month for hosting, you could be earning more \$ per month back. It is easier to host a blog on Linux hosting than it is on Windows hosting.

Before we delve into hosting – we'd better get a domain name registered.

Think very carefully about what best describes what your blog is going to be about. A relevant name targeted to your specific niche will an advantage.

For example my friend Pete loves fishing now if he wanted to start a blog about his hobby if he went and registered petelovesfishing.com he wouldn't stand a chance in the search engines, his traffic to his site would be dire.

One important thing to remember is that a blog is a personal site, so try to get your name and hobby into the domain name you are going to register.

Let's look at my friend Pete again, his full name is Pete Clapton, so his best site name would be peteclapton.com or peteclapton.co.uk depending on where he lives. Pete's one lucky dude, his name is available to register, but what if it wasn't? Well then he'd have to brainstorm a little and find the nearest ideal name available.

Let's think about what he's going to blog about, his love of fishing, so we'll add those into the mix too, we'll search again and find that peteclaptonsfishingtips.com is available.

That is even better because not only have we got his full name in the URL we also have the description of what his site is going to be about "his fishing tips". It doesn't matter too much that it is a long URL to remember, if people like his site, they will bookmark it and add it to their favourites.

The key here is your name + your hobby – get the idea?

A .com domain name can be registered for as little as \$8.88 for one year, that's a cost of just \$0.024 cents a day. One of the best places to register a name is at namecheap.com

A co.uk domain name can be registered for as little as £5.98 for two years, two years is the minimum period allowed for registering a .co.uk name. The cost is less than a penny per day. One of the best places to register a .co.uk name is at 123-reg.co.uk

Some hosting companies give you a free domain name when you take up their hosting deal, searching google for a free domain there are lots of them about. However, I strongly advise that you stay clear of these types of company, you should be in charge of what happens to your domain name and where it is hosted.

Now we have registered our domain name, we want to get some decent hosting, we are looking for a host who offers cpanel and fantastico, these are essential for the wordpress blog we are going to set up.

You can pay for hosting on a monthly fee only basis, or for longer terms, such as annually, biannually, some hosts even offer 5 year packages, what you choose really does depend upon your budget.

In the UK, you can get hosting from around [£6.99](#) per month.

In the USA, you can get hosting from around [\\$7.16](#) per month.

Take a look around and see what bargains you can find.

Once you've registered your domain name and grabbed your hosting space you may need to point your site to the host. This is really easy to do, you simply change the dns settings of the name to point to the web hosting space. You will get an email with the dns details in when you sign up for your hosting.

Typically the dns information will look like this:

ns118.your_hosters_name.com

ns119.your_hosters_name.com

They are usually sequential numbers.

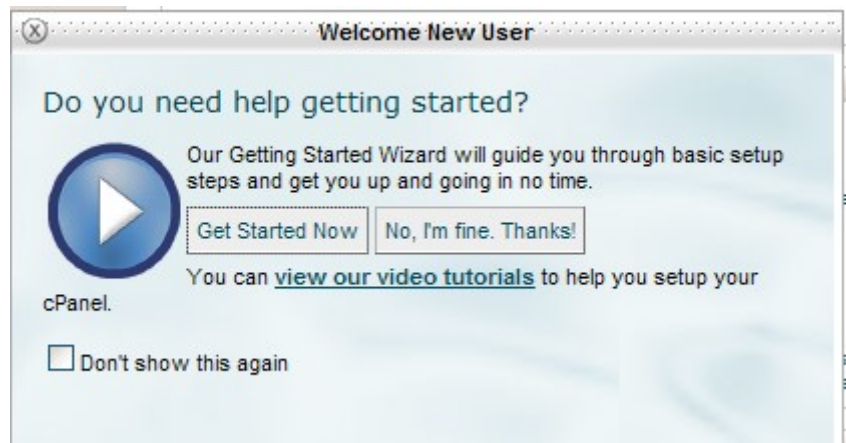
We've registered the name, signed up for hosting and have pointed the name to the hosting account. Now we need to log in to the hosting and install the blog.

9 times out of 10 you simply put your web site name followed by /cpanel

A box will pop up on the screen asking you for your user name and password, these will have been emailed to you when you signed up for your web hosting account.

Enter them and if you **are not** on a shared computer tick the save button.

Now we can log in – you will be presented with a screen that looks very busy, don't panic, most of it can be ignored for now.



Most cpanel accounts come with an inbuilt help system. There are lots of videos and how to guides inbuilt. It's best if you go through the wizard system and carry out the basic steps. When you are confident enough, you can tick the box and tell cpanel never to show you the help screen again, but for a first time user, it really is very helpful.

Go through the tasks and set up the defaults needed, set up an email address, contact details etc.

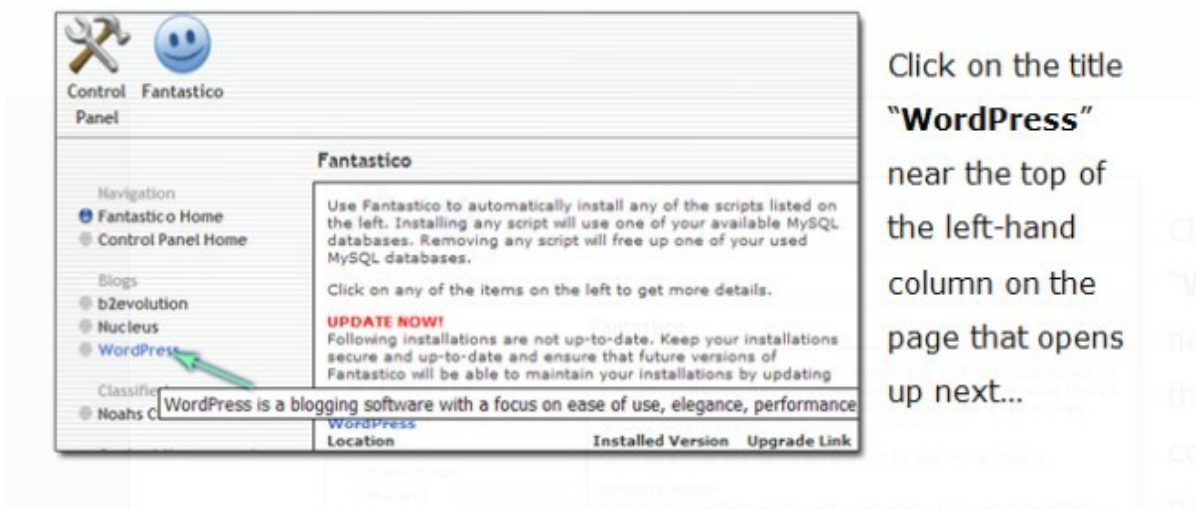


Finally we can install the basic default blog. In cpanel look for the section that looks like this.



We are looking for that blue smiley face "Fantastico De Luxe"

Clicking on this will bring up another menu section



Simply follow the online instructions on the pages as you go through them.

Choose the option of where you would like to install your blog, either in the main root folder or a separate folder. Enter you admin details, the email address you set up before and hit install.

Wordpress gives the option of sending you an email with all the installation details, it's a good idea to send this to your main email address and then keep it somewhere safe in case you forget your password. To log in to your wordpress blog for the first time, you can either click from within the installation panel or enter through your web browser.

To log in through your web browser you type in your domain name the folder name if you installed to a separate folder and then wp-login.php

In Pete's case it would look like this <http://www.peteclaptonsfishingtips.com/wp-login.php>



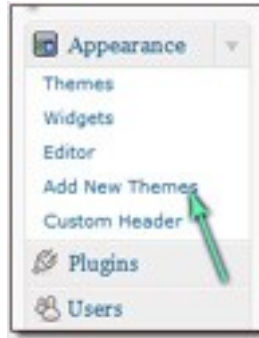
Here you simply enter your details you set as admin and either tick the remember me box or not as you choose. Once completed, simply click Log In.

As soon as you've logged in, you will see your "dashboard" This is the area where you will do all of your customisations, adding posts, content, widgets, plug ins and more importantly changing the Theme. The basic theme that comes with wordpress is just plain boring.

Notice that on the the left hand side of your Dashboard there is an expanding menu. Any on of the tabs on this menu will expand to a drop down menu as you click on them. The one we want is Appearance.



Click on Appearance and another sub menu set opens up.



Here we are looking for the option Add New Themes.

Once clicked another menu opens up within the dashboard. At the top of the page there are several options you can choose from.

You can search the database at Wordpress for a new theme, you can upload a them you have on your own computer. You can see the Featured, newest or recently updated themes just click whichever you'd like.



There are an absolute ton of websites out there offering free wordpress templates, just use google to search for them. Now You don't want just any template, you want a template that is adsense and ad block ready, and more importantly you want one that will portray your sites identity to the visitors.

Pete don't forget, is going to set his blog up as a fishing tips site, so he needs to find a template that reflects that image. He has several options here, he can spend hours looking for the right template, or he can pay someone to design one for him. His choice will be dependant upon his budget. For now he's looking at a free template.

Where can you source free templates from?

1. Wordpress.org <http://wordpress.org/extend/themes/> currently 1,193 themes available.
2. Wordpressthemebase.com <http://wordpressthemebase.com/> a wonderful diverse selection of themes.
3. Or check out all free wordpress themes known to man.
<http://www.kiberpipa.org/~ike/wpthemes/>
4. Smashing Magazine's templates
<http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2008/01/08/100-excellent-free-high-quality-wordpress-themes/>
5. <http://www.wpskins.org/> a good collection of over 900 themes.
6. Just use google, define what you are looking for in Pete's case he wanted a free wordpress template for fishing "wordpress template+fishing"
Find one you like and install it through the dashboard. Things like the header graphic can always be changed at a later date.

Personalising Your Blog

You can have a custom header created for your theme (or make one yourself in any graphics editor) Just upload it into the appropriate place on your website usually wp_content / themes / theme folder/ images.

You may have to hunt around your server a little bit to find the right header graphic to replace, it could be called anything from "header.png" "header.jpg", "header.gif" or "Logo.gif" or "Logo.jpg". Just make sure your new header is exactly the same size as the one you are going to replace.

The default header in the default Wordpress installation is 760 x 200 pixels, other templates have different size header graphic files.

Do not steal other peoples graphics. Yes it is easy to do, but it is not legal and you could get into serious trouble. If you do find a picture on someone else's site don't steal it, ask permission to use it. Or better yet, make your own.

Any graphics editor can be used to make your own unique header, from photoshop to paint.net. There are even free header programs available on the web. One really good free one is [xheaderxheader free header maker](#)

I have listed some great resources for you on the resources page.

For free to use graphics, here are one or two sites to get you started.

1. Free web graphics <http://www.freeimages.co.uk/>
2. Free web icons and templates <http://www.freegraphicsworld.com/>
3. Public image archive <http://www.morguefile.com/>

When using images that you have not taken yourself, always check out the licence terms and comply with them.

Plug ins To Make Your Blog Interactive

One problem with blogs is spam commenting. Believe it or not people actually pay other people to post spam comments on blogs. To help prevent this there is a great plug-in called askimet. To obtain askimet you need to register just the once and they will issue you with an api key and once you have added this key to your blog, spam commenting is taken care of for you. [You can download askimet from this link](#). The instructions on how to install it are on that page too.

Another really useful plug-in is All in One SEO plug-in from wordpress.org.

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/all-in-one-seo-pack/>

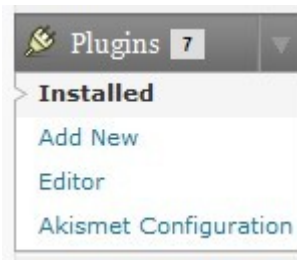
An alternative to this SEO plug-in is Headspace2 this is a powerful all-in-one plug-in to manage meta-data and handle a wide range of SEO tasks. Plus a whole lot more. You can download the latest version from this link.

<http://urbangiraffe.com/plugins/headspace2/>

As our aim is to monetise the blog, there are one or two other plug ins that are going to come in very handy and I'll point those out later on.

It's really easy to install a plug-in to your blog, and this free e-book [24hourwordpressguru](#) will help you if you get stuck.

How to Install a plug-in



Click on the plug-ins menu in the dashboard, select Add New

On the next menu choose upload if you have the plug-in on your computer.



From here, browse to where you saved the plug-in and then click the install now button.

Installing Plugin from uploaded file: cookiefire.zip

Unpacking the package.

Installing the plugin.

Plugin Installed successfully.

Actions: [Activate Plugin](#) | [Return to Plugins page](#)

Once the zip folder has uploaded, you will be given the choice to activate, click on Activate Plugin. You just do this for as many plug ins as you want.



Manage Plugins

Plugin activated.

All (15) | Active (10) | Recently Active (1) | Inactive (5) | Upgrade Available (7)

Bulk Actions

| Plugin | Description |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Akismet | Akismet checks your comments against the Akismet w can review the spam it catches under "Comments." To Stats plugin. Deactivate Edit Version 2.2.6 By Matt Mullenweg Visit plugin site |
| There is a new version of Akismet available. View version 2.2.7 Details or upgrade au | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COOKIEFIRE | Affiliate Code Dropper Deactivate Edit Version 1.0.0 By LAYCOCK PUBLISHING LIMITED |

Personalising Your Blog

Before you can start to monetize that blog, you will have to add some content.

The most important pages are your About page and your privacy page.

Your about page should tell your visitors about the site and the type of content you hope to bring them. Tell them about yourself, why you consider your self to be an expert, what experience you have.

Your visitors don't need to see picture of your family and all your pets, they need to be able to connect with YOU, so tell them about You.

My Friend Pete would have a statement something like this.

Hi and welcome to my fishing tips blog. I love fishing, I have been a keen fisherman from the age of 14 when I first went out to sea with my Granddad on his trawler. Trawling however, was not for me, it's really hard work, and I'm the lazy kind of fisherman who likes to sit at the side of the river bank, wading and casting and waiting for the catch.

Then he would show a picture of himself in his fishing gear and standing in a river..... well I guess you get the idea. Pete has introduced himself and told you about himself. He's created a picture in your head, and I'll bet you feel like you really know him now.

Another important page is your privacy page. Because you are looking to eventually use adsense to monetize the site, you will need to have a privacy statement that follows Google's guidance, but it's always a good idea to have a privacy statement anyway. There are some free online resources that you can use to add a privacy statement to your site.

Finally because of the FTC and other organisations, and the fact that you are going to promote products from the site you will need to have a statement displayed advising people that you may receive compensation for recommending a product to them. Find and Obey the Law of your Country.

A blog is nothing without content. Don't distract your visitors with excessive images that distract them from the content. They don't want to see animated gifs and masses of spinning banner ads, they want to read what you have blogged about. So keep it clean and keep it organised.

Initially you need to decide on four main categories and make at least one post to each of these categories. It's not hard to make a post, if you can use a word processing program, you can use the WYSIWYG inside the dashboard of wordpress, it works just the same way. You type, you add pictures and you publish.

Content is king, a hobbyist will have no difficulty at all in writing a post, just pretend you are discussing your subject with a fellow hobbyist and write the content as though it was a story you are telling.

Pete, my fisherman friend has got to decide on his four categories, so he's going to choose.... 4 related subject areas.

1. Fresh Water Fishing
2. Salt Water Fishing
3. Bass Fishing
4. Get Your Tackle out

Next he just has to write one post on each of the above subjects and he has the start of his money making hobby blog. Remember Content is KING. Keep the content updated, no one likes to visit a blog that has been neglected for months on end.

It is really important that you have to have the content in place **before** you approach google to add adsense ads to your site, or before you can ask Amazon for approval to become an affiliate.

Monetizing Your Blog

So just how can you make money from your hobby blog.

The most common ways are to:

1. Apply to Google and run adsense adds on the blog.
2. Apply to Amazon and recommend products from their site.
3. Go to Clickbank and look for similar products to recommend.
4. Go to Rapbank and look for similar products to recommend.
5. Go to manufacturers/suppliers websites of your hobby and see if they have an affiliate / referral program you can join.

So let's look at each of these :

Google AdSense is Googles revenue sharing advertisement program. Every time someone clicks on an ad placed on your site your earn a few cents or dollars, depending upon the payout for the ad you are running.

There are different kinds of ads you can choose to display, from text ads, Image ads, Video ads, and link ads, text ads are the easiest to integrate with your site and can be quite profitable, but before you can run any kind of ad your site needs to be approved by Google.

Google is very strict in what it will and won't allow, so take the time to read their terms and conditions, make sure you abide by them and all should go well for you. You can read their terms by going to [Google's policy page](#).

How to apply for an Adsense Account. Point your web browser to one of these links, adsense is different for the UK and the USA and create an account.

https://www.google.com/adsense/login/en_GB/

https://www.google.com/adsense/login/en_US/

There is a lot of helpful information on those pages, take the time to read it.

Sign up complete their forms and wait for approval. Once approved you get access to build which type of advertising campaign, the style of add you want to display, etc. just take your time and go through their settings according.

Once you have set your campaign, Google will give you a publishers ID and the code to paste into your blog.

Before you apply for an adsense account, you need to be aware of their basic rules: currently their criteria for accepting you is that.

Your website must be launched and contain enough textual content for their specialists to evaluate it. Websites that are under construction, don't load, or have non functioning links, will not be approved. It is important to ensure that the URL on your application form is entered correctly. Double check when you enter it onto their form.

Site Ownership

You must have access to edit the html source code of the website you submit for adsense. If you submit a site you don't own, then you won't be able to place the Adsense code on the site and your application will not be approved.

In some locations, including China and India, they also require publishers to have owned their sites for 6 months.

If you follow their guidelines and have some good content already on your site then you shouldn't really have a problem getting accepted into their program.

If your blog template is not an adsense ready template then there is an excellent plug-in you can download from here. [Adsense Plugin.](#)

Just upload and install like you did with the other plugins.

Amazon.com

Amazon.com is a Marketplace which provides a venue for you to buy and sell new, used, collectable and refurbished items, live on their website. Marketplace is not an auction – the seller sets the price of each item they list.

As an Amazon affiliate you can earn up to 10% of the sale price of an item if a buyer purchases through your links.

Again Amazon is strict in what it will and will not allow you to do so read their terms.

<https://affiliate-program.amazon.co.uk/>

<https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/>

Amazon has a whole range of link types, gadgets and gizmo's to help you market their products. Again, before you can promote for Amazon, your site needs to be approved by them.

Sign up, complete their forms, read their rules, and wait for approval.

Once you have been approved, log in to your account and you will see all the various ways you can build links or ad units for Amazon products, there is even the option to add an Amazon search box directly onto your blog.

Wordpress.org has an excellent plug-in for Amazon, you can download a copy from within your dashboard search for Amazon showcase Plugin.

Just simply upload and install like your other plugins.

ClickBank.com

Clickbank has thousands of digitally delivered products you can choose from. The products are laid on in categories in the marketplace, just look for what suits your blog content grab your "hoplink" and promote away.

Clickbank though whilst not requiring you to be approved for an account, does have strict rules that you have to meet before they will pay you any commission that is due to you. Read the terms of their Customer Distribution Requirement.

All clickbank products have to have a 60 day refund guarantee period. So even if you have made a few sales and met their CDR you could still end up not receiving all of the expected commission because of a refunder.

On the plus side, Clickbank handles all the payment processing and taxes so you don't have to worry if there is a refund, as they take back the money before they pass it on to you. Once you have received 2 check payments from them you can opt to have your commissions paid directly into your bank account.

Signing up for an account is super easy, just click this link and enter your account details. [Sign up for clickbank.](#)

Clickbank too have widgets and gadgets you can add to your blog and there are clickbank plug-ins too.

Clickbank also has a tool for cloaking your affiliate links, inside your account at clickbank, you can see how many times a link has been clicked on, how many times an order form has been submitted and how many sales you have made.

RapBank.com

[Rapbank](#) is fairly new to the marketplace, very similar to clickbank, with one huge major difference, there is no waiting for commission payments, or having to meet any kind of customer distribution requirement. Rapbank is a marketplace used by owners of the Rapid Action Profit script, it is a collection of ebooks, software, templates, and other products available for you promote and earn commissions on. All you need to do is select a product you want to promote join their affiliate program, grab your link and promotional tools and add these to your blog.

How does it work?

If the product offers a 50% commission, you get paid, every other sale, the initial sale goes to the vendor of the product and the second sale goes to you directly into your paypal account. Let's say the product price is \$47 when you make the first sale this \$47 goes to the vendor, when you make a second sale, this \$47 goes directly to you. The only downside with this is that if the second purchaser requests a refund, it is you that has to refund the money.

At present there are 693 products available to promote on rapbank, and this no doubt will increase as the program gains in popularity.

Like the others rapbank too has a gadget that you can add to your blog to promote their products.

Once you have signed up for your account, grab your API key and use their widget on your blog to promote the products. There is no fee to sign up and there is no waiting for your account to be approved.

Some products on rapbank are also listed in the clickbank marketplace and also on paydotcom.

Paydotcom.com

[Paydotcom](#) is another marketplace similar to Clickbank, Paydotcom allows sales of not just digital products but physical products too.

Signing up for paydotcom as an affiliate is free, there are currently over 70,000 products available to promote. There is a marketplace you can search for products, each product vendor sets their own level of commissions that they pay to you the affiliate, some as high as 70%.

Payment is made at the vendors discretion, typically once a month, your commission is paid directly into your paypal account. Paydotcom does take a fee from your commissions as an affiliate, however this is a small price to pay when you look at the potential earnings from promoting products from the paydotcom marketplace.

Paydotcom has it's own widget you can add to the side bar of your blog to promote products from within the paydotcom marketplace. Again it's as simple as copy and pasting lines of code.

Paydotcom does have it's own rules and regulations, again please ensure that you read and comply with them if you choose to promote products from their marketplace.

Other Affiliate Networks

There are a ton of affiliate networks out there, two of the more popular ones are :

1. Commission Junction (Ebay affiliate program) <http://www.cj.com/>
2. Linkshare <http://www.linkshare.com/>

A detailed list of 11,765 affiliate programs can be found listed at this website <http://www.associateprograms.com/directory/>

Get Paid To Blog

www.blogvertise.com

This is not particularly getting paid as an expert, it's more of a review opportunity. Here's how it works.

1. Read their rules on what is and what is not allowed, if your blog qualifies then you can register for an account and submit your blog for review.
2. Once your account is registered your blog is placed into the assignment queue, they then email you tasks/assignments to complete.
3. Follow their instructions to the letter and complete your assignment.
4. Submit your written entry back to them for review. If your blog entry is approved you get paid after 30 days. Payments are made via paypal.
5. The blog entry has to remain permanently on your site.

www.payperpost.com

Again another site where advertisers seek out bloggers to review their products. You register your blog with their service, set how much you will charge to make a blog post either by the post rate, or the price per word rate.

Once your blog is registered, advertisers make you an offer to post a blog post about their product.

You have the option to accept or decline any offer made to you. You cannot however approach advertisers they are only allowed to approach you.

There are more than 20 paid to blog sites out there similar to the two mentioned above. Whilst writing review posts won't make you enough to retire, it may just pay the cost of hosting and renewal of the domain name.

Ghost Blogging, where do you find ghost blogging jobs?

Ghost blogging is just like Ghost Writing, it's work for hire, just like any other ghost writing job.

One of the best places to look for ghost blogging jobs is on the freelancers web sites. Elance there is a separate section on Elance just for writers and translators. You have to sign up to Elance there are 4 options for membership Free and Paid from \$10 up to \$40 a month. If you join as a free member you are allowed to bid on up to 10 projects per month. Obviously paid members are given priority over free members.

You also have to build up your portfolio for display on their site. Elance is more for those wishing to become professional writers rather than hobby bloggers.

Other sites that you may find helpful :

<http://www.freelancewritinggigs.com>

<http://www.craigslist.com>

<http://jobs.problogger.net/>

One of the problems with being a ghost blogger is that you get no recognition for the work you have done. Yes, you will have been paid for it, but as a hobby blogger, do you really want another job? The aim of the game is to get your hobby blog to attract the traffic and visitors and for them to purchase your recommended products you are promoting from your site. So how can we get more visitors.

Why not become a "Guest" blogger, this is different to being a "Ghost" blogger with Guest blogging you get to keep the credit for the post.

Guest blogging is a win-win situation for all the parties involved. It helps to grow traffic for each blog and strengthens relationships. Find similar blogs to your own and ask if you can write guest posts for them. Use google, to search them out. If you guest post on a blog with similar interests, your visitor rate will greatly increase, more viewers, potentially will equal more sales.

If you are successful in being accepted as a guest blogger, make sure your blog posting contains at least the following details.

- Your name
- Your blog's name and a link to your blog
- One or two short facts that show that you're qualified to write on the topic.
- A link to your RSS feed if you have one.

Guest blogging is a great way to get additional back links and visitors to your own blog site.

Other ways to maximise web traffic.

Does your hobby have a forum where other hobbyists hang out?

Have you joined it?

Do you contribute useful and valuable information to it?

Have you placed a link to your blog in your signature file on that forum?

By being an active member on a forum other members will naturally be interested in visiting your blog, they can't help it, it's human nature.

Other ways to increase the number of visitors to your blog is to post comments on other peoples blogs. You should be looking for blogs that allow the "do follow" option. Don't spam, leave a genuine comment. There is a chance that the owner of that blog may comment back on your blog. Commenting on other blogs will help you get some genuine comments back for your blog too.

Whichever way you decide to profit from your blog, make sure you are always honest in everything you do. Maximise your blogs potential, but remember, you still need time to enjoy that hobby.

Useful Resources

Free Wordpress Plugins:

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/>

The plug-ins you need:

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/all-in-one-seo-pack/>

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/akismet/>

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/amazon-showcase-wordpress-widget/>

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/whydowork-adsense/>

Free Wordpress Templates:

<http://wordpressthemebase.com/>

<http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2008/01/08/100-excellent-free-high-quality-wordpress-themes/>

Free Graphics Editors:

<http://www.xheader.com>

<http://www.gimp.com>

<http://www.paint.net>