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By Peter Roe

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Reselling Ebooks – Has the Bubble Burst? By Peter Roe

The Web is crammed to bursting point with ebooks with 'Resale Rights' and sales web sites – but does market saturation mean that most people are wasting their time and money trying to sell them?

The answer may be 'yes' – unless you do things a little differently.

Does any of this sound familiar?

You've bought the latest 'killer marketing' ebook complete with resale rights, you've uploaded a copy of the sales 'mini-site' to your web server and used your favourite auto-submitter to send the URL to the search engines. Maybe you've joined a few 'link exchanges' and perhaps even bought some 'pay per click' keywords that looked hopeful.

So now you sit back and wait for the dosh to roll in.

.....And waitand wait.

So what has happened? You've done what you've been told to do – you've shelled out on a good domain name, web hosting, maybe some promotion software or PPC keywords – but still no sales. So WHY aren't people buying 'your' product?

The answer probably lies in your 'web stats'.

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Take a look – just how many 'hits' are you getting? Chances are, just a few a day, at best.... and THIS is why you aren't making the sales. And the main reason for this? – simple market saturation. There are simply too many people doing EXACTLY the same thing you are, too many people submitting identical cloned web sites to the search engines, too many people trying to get noticed using exactly the same keywords.

The fact is that it is simply no longer enough to do what the others are doing. If you want to succeed on the Web, it is now absolutely ESSENTIAL to do something different in order to get

noticed.

For the 'why' of this, lets look at a brief history of 'web marketing'.

In the beginning there were the search engines. It didn't take very long for the 'direct mail' people to discover this free resource and to use it (and abuse it) to advertise their stuff at almost zero cost, to hundreds of thousands of 'prospects'(the Web was still a baby then).

Then there was email marketing – just 'harvest' a ton of email addresses from the Web then blast the lot of them with your 'killer' offer. Never mind the quality – just feel the quantity!

Next were the 'free for all' classified ad sites, banner ads, pop-ups, 'pay per click', Google Adwords, and the rest – each touted in turn by the web marketing 'wizards' as THE way to grab a share of the Internet gravy train's riches.

The trouble is, of course, that while each of these methods worked for a while (and often made a fortune for those who were first on the block with an effective system) nothing seems to work for long on the Web.

Of course, that has never stopped various 'gurus' who have made a killing with each new marketing method then going on to try to make another one – by selling their 'system' or 'formula' to others, long AFTER the wave has passed.

And the waves are now passing at ever increasing speed.

For example, in the race to get otherwise unexciting web pages to

the top of the search engine listings, 'search engine optimization' techniques have been used successfully for some time to increase 'page rank' in the major search engines. They worked well for many years and it is only relatively recently that the writing has appeared on the wall for these methods, in the form of new indexing methods by Google and other SEs, designed to exclude web sites using these techniques.

Similarly, mass email marketing ('spamming') worked for several years, until the volume of trash became so large that individuals, web service providers and even governments have been forced to take steps to stem the flow.

Even its house-trained successor, the use of 'opt-in' mailing lists generated from sales or sign-ups, is rapidly becoming ineffective, as targeted messages become lost in a torrent of

spam, or are deleted by 'anti-spam' filters.

For a while, banner ads and even FFA postings worked (but never very well!), as did 'pay per click' and other paid methods for getting included in search engine results. But now, just a year or so after PPC was hailed as the holy grail for savvy marketers, the competition for useable keywords and phrases has become so intense that the cost of hits has become uneconomic for anything but specialized niche-interest keywords.

And recently, 'pop-ups', 'pop-unders', 'slide-ins' and various other irritating intrusions have been touted as the next marketing breakthrough. In fact, for maybe six months they have worked quite well for one particular purpose – building 'opt-in' lists in exchange for freebies such as an ebook or newsletter.

But guess what? Now a large proportion of surfers never venture on the Net without their faithful 'pop-up killer' software running, so they will never even see your amazing offers – no matter how tempting! Even those who don't currently use such software soon will, as search engine 'toolbars' and the latest browser software packages offer pop-up elimination as standard, often as the 'default' setting.

It seems that every way the new and hopeful Web marketer turns, the way is blocked almost straight away. So what's a poor marketer to do? (And many WILL become or stay poor, if they don't adapt to these changes!)

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Well the bad news is that the 'bar to entry' to the formerly quite simple world of web marketing is being progressively raised higher, and it's not going to go back down again.

It is simply no longer enough to buy a domain and put up your sales sites, regardless of how 'search engine friendly' they are. No amount of 'reciprocal linking' will now have much effect on your traffic, unless you can get links from major 'authority' sites – which is VERY unlikely!

How about paying for traffic? Well, if you sell fishing lures or model ship kits – go for it! Niche markets are a perfect fit for PPC, 'Adwords' and the like, provided that you can identify key words and phrases that will be searched on by your target market, but not by others.

But what if you are trying (like all the others) to sell ebooks about web marketing or related topics? The short answer is – forget it! Thanks to 'unlimited resale rights' and ready-made sales web sites, this market is now so unbelievably

over-saturated that the bid prices for the heavily-searched PPC keywords used in this business are so high it is almost impossible to make a profit on low ticket products.

OK, so follow the advice of the already-successful 'big name' web marketers – "Build your lists!" (compile 'opt-in' lists of interested visitors who sign up for a freebie).

Setting up the autoresponder systems necessary to do this has already added a 'technical' hurdle that keeps out many. But even if you are one of those who can get an email capture system working, how are you going to get your visitors to come? After all, no traffic = no list.

So is it time to pack up your web site and go back to posting out your mailers? Well, a little earlier I said 'the bad news is.....'. So does that imply that 'midst all this gloom there is some GOOD news?

There is..... but only for some.

For those who believe that 'web marketing' is just a matter of cloning someone else's sales web page and maybe doing a bit of 'promotion' by submitting the cloned page to 500 FFA sites and

search engines, the dream is now over.

The sheer level of competition, the thousands of others using exactly the same web site to try to sell exactly the same ebooks, and the new hostility of the search engines to 'me too' web sites, mean that this approach can now be pronounced clinically dead.

BUT for those who are prepared to do their own thing, even if this means some hard work, the prospects are good.

Even though from now on, the hard fact is that making useful money from the Web will become more of an effort than before, this actually represents a real opportunity for genuine 'netpreneurs' – those who are prepared to take a few chances and innovate.

The 'raised bar' will have the effect of beginning to thin out the hordes of copycat 'web marketers' who just endlessly recycle the same old sales web pages. And this in turn will open the way for those who go beyond this kind of mechanical 'wannabe' effort by adding something NEW to the Internet.

So if you want to join the relatively small band of those who are succeeding on the Web, start thinking out of the box. Watch what

all the others are doing.... then do something different!

By becoming a 'contrarian' you will be expressing your individuality, rather than just following the herd.

And it pays!

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Peter Roe is the author of The WebProfits home study course and webmaster of The Ebook Discount Warehouse at <http://web-profits.co.uk/warehouse>. For some practical ideas on how to join the new wave of successful web marketers, read more articles by Peter and others at <http://web-profits.co.uk/warehouse/articles.htm>

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