

So you want to go into ghostwriting?

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By Janet Ilacqua

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A good way to get writing experience is by ghostwriting, that is writing for individuals and companies under their bylines rather than your own. With ghostwriting, you can test out writing for different genres without endangering your reputation as you would if you wrote under your own name. Here are some description of some hot ghostwriting markets and tips on how to get into them.

Technical writing

Technical writers develop technical materials, such as equipment manuals, appendices, or operating and maintenance instructions. Documentation format includes not only print, but also, increasingly, PDF, HTML, interactive multimedia and help files. Although most technical writers work on-site, there is some offsite work. Most technical writers are employed by the IT industry. Although demanding, technical writing can be lucrative and interesting.

You should have the ability to write clearly and or some knowledge about, a specialized field--engineering, business, or one of the sciences. Familiarity with Word, HTML and FrameMaker is essential and familiarity with multimedia and online help tools, such as RoboHelp, is highly desirable A degree in engineering, computer science, or one of the hard sciences (for example, chemistry, physics) is highly recommended and, lately, is becoming a prerequisite for many jobs. Right now, there are many experienced writers looking for work; so there are limited opportunities for persons without previous tech writing experience

Outlook: the field has been severely impacted by the consolidation of the IT industry and outsourcing. The opportunities will continue to decrease due to the ongoing consolidation of IT and outsourcing.

Good places to look for jobs: Monster.com, Sologig.com, techwriting.com, Rentacoder.com Dice.com.

Business/Corporate writing

Other writers worked in advertising and related services, public and private educational services, government agencies, religious organizations, and business, professional, labor, political, and similar organizations. They prepare manuals,

A degree in English, business, communications, marketing, or some other business or writing-related field is helpful. Knowledge of Word is essential and familiarity with multimedia and online help tools, such as RoboHelp, is highly desirable. Knowledge of technology and specialized subject areas is useful tool

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Outlook: Like tech writing, business writing has been impacted by the consolidation in IT industry, business cost-cutting measures, and outsourcing. However, the outlook for business and corporate writer is not as bleak as technical writers because business writers are spread out over a wide range of industries, not just IT.

Good websites to look for work on: Guru.com.com, Elance, Monster.com, Sologig,

Academic writing

Academic writing is not always done by academics. Textbook packagers often get a known name to put together an outline and then hire writers to actually write the book – a sort of academic ghostwriting. It is work made for hire and pays reasonably well. The actual writer usually only gets a little tiny credit somewhere in the front or back of the book, while the expert gets the cover credit. In certain medical and scientific disciplines, ghostwriters also either write or heavily edit some journal articles. In addition, over 200 paper mills and term paper sites that employ writers with advanced degrees to write or edit

term papers, dissertations, and theses for high school, college, and graduate schools.

Caution: Writing term papers for other people is illegal in many states and sanctions may get tougher. For example, in California, recently, AB 2800 would extend to high schools an existing provision of state law – largely ignored since its adoption in the 1970s – that bans sale of term papers for college credit.

In order to break into academic writing, you need a Masters or Doctorate, good research skills, strong writing skills, strong attention to detail, access to a online research database, such as Virtual Library or EBSCO, patience (oftentimes, academic work will be reviewed by three or four referees and many changes will have to be made) and familiarity with the APA and MLA citation styles. In addition, you be familiar with stylistic and formatting requirements for papers, journal articles, theses, dissertation, and other academic formats.

Good websites to look for work: Guru, Elance, Freelancewriting.com, college newspaper classifieds, Craigs List

Outlook: Good. The need for academic writing is growing due to the increasing numbers of students in college and graduate school

Web content

There are abundant opportunities for ghostwriting content for websites, ezines, E-books, and newsletters. Many websites are looking for content to enhance their sites. .

To get started in this field, you need to be able to write crisply and concisely. To get an idea of how web sites are written, do a search on a subject that you would like to write about and look at the articles in the website or look at any of the writing sites mentioned below. Finding online writing opportunities takes a little more searching than finding print markets. Print guides are readily available at the library, bookstore, and online, but you have to know where to look to find exclusive listings of online writing jobs.

Outlook: Very good. 171,000 websites are being added every week according to a recent survey of t Ezine–Universe.com strives to be the most comprehensive directory of email publications on the Internet. There are currently exactly 7873 ezines listed in Ezine–Universe.com, and the directory grows by 10 a week.

Here are some ways to find potential jobs and markets for websites, ezines, and newsletters:

- 1.Check out job and market listings on general job search websites. Elance.com Guru.com,
- 2.Look at the job boards and classified ads on ezines and websites for writers: Freelancewriting.com The Write Jobs The Write Markets Reports World Wide Freelance,Writer's Market Webzine,

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Writerfind.com Writers Guidelines Database Writers' Job Market

3. Sign up for newsletters, mailing lists, and discussion groups for writers. Most of these have job listings, as well as other valuable information for writers.

4. Surf the web for your favorite sites, and chances are, they accept submissions. They will likely have guidelines listed, too, to help you get started. Subscribe, post, and soon, you will be ready to contribute an article or two.

Books

Ghostwriting books for individuals is probably the most visible form of ghostwriting. Yes, ghostwriters do write celebrity bios. However, besides celebrity bios, ghostwriters are employed to write books and E-books on any topic imaginable. Here is a sample of some current ghostwriting requests:

A detailed fantasy novel along the lines of Stephen Wiess

A book discussing importance of detoxification by way of nutrition and other means.

The 100 best science fair projects

E-book on skin care for the African American women.

Outlook: Very good for writers who have already published a book. If you have not published a book, you should try to have samples of large-scale projects that you have worked on, such as manuals,

study guides, and so on. Ghostwriting books requires patience, organization, listening abilities, and perseverance. Before you sign up for a ghostwriting project, be sure that you feel comfortable working with the subject material and the author.

General rates for ghostwriting

Here are some figures from the 2004 edition of *Writer's Marketplace*:

Ghostwriting for business (usually trade magazine articles for business columns): high: 115/hour

Ghostwriting a book: \$13,313, \$6,000 – \$21,000

Ghostwriting novel: \$25 per hour

Ghostwriting an article/column: \$1.01 per word, 35 cents – \$2.86

Web site content: \$50 per hour; 53 cents per word; 26 cents – \$1

Web site contract writing: 53 cents per word, 10 cents – \$1.50 (27 cases); \$2,500–\$3,000 minimum for new site content development

Ghostwriting research papers: \$8–10 per page

Janet K. Ilacqua is a freelance writer based in Tracy, California. Check her website www.writeupondemand.com for more information and samples.

The Best Freelance Job Boards for Writers

By Janet Ilacqua

How many times have you checked out a job board to that either it no longer exists or that there is one or two jobs listed. Out of the hundreds of job boards on the Web today, how do you find those containing projects that you are interested in and qualified for.

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I have recently surveyed over 300 freelance web sites and these are the best boards for freelance writers. The benchmark that I used for judging the board was the number of legitimate projects (as opposed to "business opportunities") and requests for submission being posted every month. I have only included ones posting 30 projects or more a month

The very best

I picked Guru This huge all-inclusive board connects independent professionals (a.k.a. "gurus") with contract projects. If you are new to independent consulting, check out the Run Your Biz section, which includes a "Getting Started" column, where you can leave a question to be answered by experts. Lots of other useful information (e.g. tax and finance, legal, etc.) for contractors. Find a contracting job ("gig") searching by field (creative/media, finance and legal, etc.), keyword, and geography.. Recently, it acquired IT Moonlighter , another with lots of freelance jobs. Whatever, Guru is probably the largest freelance marketplace on the Web. Over 3,300 projects posted last month.

What makes

Guru.com

stand out from is the number and variety of projects listed and the easiness of

accessing the job. Unlike the others, Guru sends daily email alerts of writing gigs that match your profile.

Number of writing projects posted every month: 207

Type of projects: Everything and anything, many articles, ghostwriting, editing, copyright, some onsite, some technical. Has the best all around listing of freelance writing gigs.

Other good freelance writing sites

AllFreelanceWork. Its sister site AllFreelance is my number one site for articles about freelancing and freelance resources.

Number of writing projects posted every month: 10

Type of projects: Technical and business writing

Contracted Work A freelance site that has grown in great leaps and bounds. You can do a search and find a great number of projects. There is a monthly fee in order to search for projects, but it might be worth checking out. I personally found that I was not finding enough leads for the type of writing I do to be worth the fee.

Number of writing projects posted every month: 50-74

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Type of projects: Openings tends more to web content, copywriting, and sales and marketing

Eance. I was actively involved in bidding on this site for a year. However, I did not get my money's worth. It is geared towards business and technical writing.

Number of writing projects posted every month: 130+

Type of projects: little bit of everything: articles, ghostwriting, e-books, web content, technical. Lots of editing and proofreading jobs too

Freelance Work Exchange Non-Auction freelance site. The Freelance Work Exchange has listings for writers, designers, consultants, programmers. Yes ... it does cost to join; however, there is \$3.00 7-day trial memberships so you can test it to see if it will get you work! Highly recommended. Freelance Work Exchange is a solid, reliable freelance site, but in order to search jobs it will cost you a monthly fee.

Number of writing projects posted every month: 30-40

Type of projects: little bit of everything: calls for articles, ghostwriting, e-books, web content, technical. Geared more towards general writing markets, as opposed to corporate-style stuff.

Freelance Writing This is the ultimate job board for freelance writers. Contest, blogs, forums, resources. Everything.

Number of writing projects posted every month: 40

Type of projects: Calls for articles, copywriting, E-books, research papers, ghostwriting,

Independent Homeworkers Alliance -- touts itself as the "largest provider of legitimate home-based jobs on the Internet." Offers a search engine for at-home jobs, as well as numerous resources. \$29.95 a month Subscription

Number of writing projects posted every month: 70

Type of projects: calls for submissions of articles, scripts, e-books, some sales and marketing, not much technical writing.

Sologigs With over 20,000 projects for freelancers, Sologig has a lot to offer. You need to register to get access to all the projects, with the higher levels of membership securing you a higher profile in the exchange. Most of the freelance writing jobs were onsite technical/business writing.

Number of writing projects posted every month: Estimate 100+ projects posted every month. To see the exact number, you have to register. A Bronze membership with \$78.75 prepaid for three months

Type of projects: geared heavily towards onsite technical writing gigs

Telecommuting Jobs -- where job seekers can view several hundred telecommuting/offsite jobs posted

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directly by employers, as well as thousands of jobs posted to other major job sites. Searching is free,

but there is a small fee to post your resume. Telecommuting Jobs Telecommute jobs for Writers, Programmers, Artists, etc. Links to additional sites to continue the search for that which is so hard to find – a good paying, mid-term telecommute contract. Good deal for the \$10/yr registration fee required.

Number of writing projects posted every month: 80

Type of projects: Wide variety of projects: article wanted, research papers, journalism, copywriting, not much technical

Workhome.com

Welcome to

Workhome.com

a resource for work at home jobs for your small office or

home business. We provide job posting for work at home jobs and advertising to work at home businesses. Posting on work home jobs is free and you may contact our work at home providers by visiting the profile page and clicking email professional

Number of writing projects posted every month: 20–30

Type of projects: Wide variety of projects: articles, web content, sales and marketing, technical

A word to the wise

Be selective about what types of projects that you bid for. There is a lot of competition out there, so do not waste your time with projects that you are not qualified for or do not interest you. If you are spending more than an hour a day responding to leads from the job boards, then you may need to redefine your niche. Don't try to be all things to all people. In addition, remember that, in order to be a successful freelance writer, you should not be using the boards as your only way of finding projects. You should also be out there networking with other writer, setting up your own website, and researching writing opportunities in your own community. In the end, these strategies will net your more work than limiting yourself to working the job boards.

Janet K. Ilacqua is a freelance writer based in Tracy, California. She specializes in academic writing and ghostwriting of books and manuals for individuals and small businesses. For more information about her services, check her website at

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