

This Free E-Book is brought to you by [Natural-Aging.com](http://Natural-Aging.com).

**100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment**  
**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
**Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**

**The Truth about Online Content: It's Time for Writers to Take Back the Web**

**By Melissa Brewer**

**Brewer**

Google.com, one of the web's hottest search engines, has indexed over 1,346,966,000 web pages to date. The World Wide Web is officially gigantic, with hundreds of thousands of corporate, small business, and ecommerce websites vying for something more than just the "eyeballs" that web analysts hailed in the 1990's. In order to create success, websites are now searching for a steady, interactive audience. Why aren't they succeeding? Could it STILL have something to do with the content?

About a year ago, the entire web was filled with a few wonderfully hip, fatally cool clichés; "Content is King," "Your Website Needs Stickiness," "CRM is key!" and new resources, allegedly customer-oriented, began to explode across the internet. Syndicated web content became a cool way to get free words to fill up space on a website. Soon, companies such as moreover.com began create a content overlap. Website competition may be presenting the exact same news feed at the exact same time, with the exact same keyword-rich content!

Once again, the web industry began buzzing, "Learn How to Create Unique Content for Your Website!" The HTML Writer's Guild began offering classes in "Advanced Web Writing", EEI Communications began offering corporate training courses in "Writing for the Web and New Media", and universities across the country added web writing to their technology-driven and webmaster-centered curriculum. Once trained, web design companies began touting their new "writing skills", offering a one-stop-solution to their new website customers.

The Buzzkill for Web-Based Business

## The Truth about Online Content: It's Time for Writers to Take Back the Web

Before you ask, "What does this have to do with me, as a writer?"

Answer this question: Did you just read ANYTHING about writers in the last two paragraphs?

Of course you didn't. Writers, traditionally, have shied away from web markets. Many writers simply think that their skills are not meant for web-based work, resulting in a strange shortage of web content writers.

"Wait," the well-informed web surfer may say, "There are plenty of writers on the web! In fact, there's enough quality writing online that Salon.com can now charge for content!" While it's true that web-based magazines that specialize in content attract professional writers, it is not true that the average corporate website, ecommerce outfit, or web-based business attract web-specific writers.

As an experiment, go to google.com and type in "content creation" right now. How many writers are pulled up vs. web developers offering content services alongside their website development and design? Why do you think they do this?

Apparently, writers just aren't interested. At a recent Creative Network gathering, a publisher told me that it is "Great" that I write for the web. He employs over 60 writers at his consulting firm, yet none of them are really interested in web writing. They do, however, want to outsource work to me because their clients are looking for this skill.

There is a common assumption that web-based solution providers (such as web designers, programmers and developers) are experts in all facets of web-based business. Alongside this assumption is the "technophobia" that plagues many writers and prevents them from offering their services to online markets. We think that we're unwanted or unneeded, and our services will be rejected.

Where does this assumption come from? Perhaps it is because the "techies" created and coined the word "content" when describing the text on a website. Rather than a pretty word such as "prose" or a practical word like "writing", the buzz about online content created a bizarre rebellion against creativity and gave writers a strange aversion to web-based work; how could a writer be needed for something as dull as "content"? Isn't this something that web designers handle?

The context of writing, when applied to online media, is perceived

somewhat differently. New web style guidelines, which helped people read online without getting a headache, for a time became the sole criteria for judging whether website content was up to standards. Jakob Nielson, a famous industry analyst-turned-usability guru, pigeonholed web writing and content alongside web design. Instead of hailing "content" as a wonderful way to communicate with website visitors, the term "concise, objective, and scannable" was born, and web design and content became a means to the ultimate goal; "usability." (Who can be creative when they're using words like "usability" and "user interface", anyway?) Webmasters created the web, coined new terms, and used new, techie language to describe old products.

### The Results

How many corporate websites out there actually make you want to work for them? How many ecommerce websites sound excited and knowledgeable about their product lines? How many email newsletters do you actually find worth reading in a given week? Most likely, unless you're just not very picky, you'll have trouble naming more than one or two sources. Which means, that out of all the websites and newsletters out there, there are only a handful that are getting what they want; repeat, loyal visitors. This is where content creation as a writing career becomes a reachable goal.

### The Solution

If corporate websites want web content that inspires, creates an emotional response, or at least sparks a memory (tech term: "branding"), it's time for them to go to the people who will give articles and copy a chance in hell for success. That's us, folks! While web writing does combine a unique set of skills, with a little talent and the right training, a writer can easily transition from print to web and fill this important writing niche.

It's time to claim our writing markets online and offer our skills to the companies that need us most. Most of them are waiting for a reliable source of content to come along.

We're the freelance writers. We're picky about the words we use, the sources we quote, and voice and tone of the content we create. We get to know an audience, not "users" or "eyeballs". And we pride ourselves not only on aesthetically pleasing text, but creating prose and copy that works. Not in a mechanical sense, but a human sense.

Freelance web writers are not simply riding the web industry buzz,

but we're busy carefully crafting words that say precisely what a web company needs to say.

That's right; there are creative folks who make a living writing for the web! In fact, we were writing for the web before it came along. We've been writing "concise, (slightly) objective, and scannable" documents since the middle ages.

Back then, we called it poetry. :-)

So, are you ready to write for the web?

Melissa Brewer is a full-time freelance writer and web content consultant. Visit: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/webwritingbuzz> or send an email to: [webwritingbuzz-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:webwritingbuzz-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

## **Where have all the web content sites gone?**

**By Melissa Brewer**

### **Where have all the web content sites gone? by Melissa Brewer**

Many web content websites have vanished or stopped in their tracks in the last few months.

It's quite amazing that this has happened, actually, in the aftermath of the September 11th tragedies — more people than ever are now using the web to get vital news information in real-time. (Family members in my household now visit international news websites to get a different perspective on the events going on!)

Content is still around, websites still advertise for content creation jobs, and yet the websites for web writers and the content community have dissipated to a small, yet vital, few.

So, if you're looking for support, news, and training, where should you go? Here's a rundown of the surviving — and thriving — websites and communities for those of us who write online!

#### **Web Page Content**

<http://www.webpagecontent.com/>

Articles and products to improve web content

>From the website: "75+ ways to make your web content more usable, readable, credible, accessible and profitable, and attract more traffic through search engines. New articles every week or so." An

interesting mix of content and creation how-to's.

#### Contentious

<http://www.contentious.com/articles/011210.htm>

Amy Gehran continues to write her monthly articles on online writing and content creation at [www.contentious.com](http://www.contentious.com). Meet with her when she travels to DC!

#### Online Content UK

<http://www.onlinecontentuk.org>

Online Content UK has moved up to fill the gap in the UK content scene. They are now hosting events, an online discussion group, and they plan on adding UK Content Creation jobs in early 2002.

#### Independents Day

[http://www.independentsday.org/about\\_id/aboutid.php](http://www.independentsday.org/about_id/aboutid.php)

>From the website: "INDEPENDENTS DAY is a worldwide project celebrating independent content and design on the web. It's supported

by an informal network of designers, artists, writers, editors, developers, and producers who create content and design to enrich the web."

#### Web Writer News

<http://www.webwriternews.com>

Emily Moorehead's website is packed with news, columns, and resources for web writers.

If I missed your website, which is a definite possibility, please email me your details at [mysmys@home.com](mailto:mysmys@home.com) and I'll let everyone know you're out there!

#### Publisher of:

The Web Writing Buzz Newsletter

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/webwritingbuzz>

#### The Writer's Online Survival Guide

<http://mysmys.tripod.com/hewritersonlinesurvivalguide/>

\*32 packages of Ramen Noodles = \$4.00

\*230+ Writing-Specific Job Sources Online = \$4.00

\*Not having to spend hours searching on the web for new ramen noodle recipes or dead-end writing job links = Priceless\*

[mysmys@home.com](mailto:mysmys@home.com)



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by [Natural-Aging.com](http://Natural-Aging.com).

**[100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment](#)  
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances  
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**