

Travel Writing - What Works Online

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Travel writing online isn't quite the same as in the "paper world." Here's a look at how it's done.
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In some ways travel writing online is similar to that in the print world. Readers still want the facts about a location, maybe an interesting perspective, and some useful advice. However, this doesn't mean you can just write the same article for both a magazine and a website. There are some important differences.

{bot_wrgoogle}The first has to do with how the readers find your article or page. They see it in the table of contents of a magazine, but online, people find articles using search engines. A man types in "hiking in yellowstone," for example. Perhaps your web page is about exactly that. But if it's titled "My Weekend Wilderness Walk," he'll probably never find what you wrote. You have to optimize your writing for the keywords that people are using when they search online - a whole topic in itself.

This is true whether you're building a page, or writing an article for free distribution. But for the latter there are still other necessities. People not only have to find what you've written, but they also have to take the next step: visit your website. Otherwise you get little value from distributing your articles.

Whether submitting your article to an online directory, then, or to another website, you need to include a working link to your own site. You also need to give the reader a reason to click it. The link will normally be in the "author's resource box" at the end of the article, sometimes titled, "About the Author." This is where you get to "advertise."

A good article is not enough. You have to sell the reader on visiting your site, because even the best travel writing may not do this for you. How do you do this then? In the resource box.

If you have a free ebook, you might say: "Click here for the free ebook, '10 Tips For Traveling To Spain.'" You have to at least make the web site sound interesting, perhaps with a tease like, "Discover the insider secrets of getting cheap plane tickets at..." Of course good writing alone may build your reputation, but for maximum value you need to get that click through to the site.

Advantages Of Online Travel Writing

The examples above are not about selling your articles, because that isn't the way to make travel writing pay on the internet - a big difference from the print world. You may be able to sell your articles to some sites, but the pay is generally poor. This is why writing online is normally all about promoting your website and/or products.

How do you make money then? Here is a typical scenario: I write an article on traveling to Mexico, and submit it to fifteen article directories, where it's taken and used on other websites as well. Eventually it's in forty places online. In the resource box at the end of the article, readers are promised something valuable or interesting if they click that link and visit my website. On the site they can buy my ebook, click on the ads which I get paid for, or visit the companies who pay me a commission when I send a buyer to them. Here are four advantages of putting your travel writing online:

1. No need to sell your writing. You never have to find a magazine or newspaper to buy your articles, and no editor can reject your writing. Build a website and sell your own ebooks, or sell ad space, or link to affiliate products, and you can start making money in a few weeks.
2. Small investment. There is no need to even spend money sending out your manuscripts. You can start making money with your travel writing this week by creating a free blog where you post tips and promote affiliate products - no investment required. Starting a website is inexpensive as well.
3. Online articles are short. Internet attention spans aren't very long, and directories want shorter articles for fast loading

of pages. Your articles will usually be between 400 and 1000 words for these reasons. At that length, you can probably write a few good ones tonight.

4. You get to work from anywhere in the world. I've written articles while in a hotel room in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado and in an internet cafe in Ecuador. You can even put new pages on your website from any computer connected to the internet, wherever you are.

One benefit which is common to travel writing online or off, is the tax deductions you get. Your vacations can become deductible expenses (talk to your accountant). In fact, if you start a free blog with the aim of making money, you're in business.

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