

Free Content

Contributed by Ed Howes
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I was never career oriented. I developed a wide range of interests because I was an early reader with an appetite for knowledge and information. My dad was a reader and he subscribed to enough magazines that I always had lots of free content. By the time I was a teenager, I was buying the content I wanted at the newsstand when my paper route collection day came around on Friday.

{bot_wrgoogle}For all the reading I've done in my life, I was never drawn to write and I have no explanation. It was the mid eighties before I had anything to say and no one to say it to beyond my immediate family. But I found a few places locally I could write and publish at little personal expense beyond the time. The process fascinated me and it was always a cheap thrill to see my words in print. I accepted that few people would read what I had to say or had any interest in my subjects. I was not discouraged by the fact that no one I knew ever came up to me and said; "I read your article and I liked it". All my personal satisfaction came from the process and knowing I expressed myself clearly and simply, so that I enjoyed reading what I wrote. It was simply a hobby and a creative outlet.

Five years ago I developed a visual impairment that substantially altered my lifestyle. A close friend urged me to write some of the things we talked about when we were together. When she made me a gift of her old PII computer and I discovered I could read light text on dark fields, I acted on her advice. So began my re education.

I wrote about the things I had learned over the years. Because I was a rat race drop out by 1980 and forsook my material desires for the so called good life, I developed a very alternative point of view on all the things others took for granted. My internet connection was indirect and I only got enough feedback from my helper to know there was a fair amount of activity on the web page I had. It was a publishing requirement by two article directories on which my friend also submitted my articles. I began to think there could actually be an audience for the things I wanted and needed to say. I don't know where I first heard that content was king on the internet but I'm sure it's only been the last couple of years I have had to consider the implications.

The first implication was that reading is gaining in popularity because TV and radio are becoming wastelands and the internet requires reading. I thought both developments to be positive events. The next was the permanence of online publishing compared to print, radio and TV. This was especially mind boggling. To think the virtual world would offer more permanence than the material world in which I found no particular home.

The next implication was that a global market of millions meant that I could eventually connect with some of the people who would enjoy reading what I had to say. I could see that if I developed a small reader following, it could expand. The major implication probably struck me last. I had at my disposal a vehicle in which I could do much good and I could give freely of the little I had to offer. That discovery rocked my world.

When I finally got a personal internet connection a few months ago, all implications were confirmed. While most content was driving sales of some sort in online marketing, it was still a once in a lifetime opportunity to speak and be heard by such numbers as cannot be counted. Then the weight of responsibility rained down upon me. Do I want to write things - say things, I can never deny and never take back entirely? Who the hell am I to figuratively carve my words in stone? Would I embarrass myself? Those questions had to be answered in the very beginning of my on line publishing.

Posting on new sites has confirmed my answers because I end up reading all the stuff I wrote one, two and three years ago in order to write summaries and choose key words. I find I am generally pleased by my older work and I take that to mean that it will please others as well. The free content wars under way when I finally connected, was only so much more encouragement. I found many brand new free content directories without doing a search. Two and three publishing invitations were appearing in my Email each week. I was very busy registering with these new directories and submitting articles and even considering the purchase of submission software to mechanize a tedious process.

Even with the new interest in reading, one can imagine that short attention spans TV helped create will not accommodate a lot more books. But short form writing, to include tee shirts, bumper stickers, poems, songs and articles will be the most popular formats for the written word for a long time to come. It is the internet and the appetite for short form content that will fuel the global appetite for new ideas for the foreseeable future. Millions of us will supply the demand. Most of us at some personal profit. The most exciting thing of all is that people are being paid to give away things of value. This is a New Age ethic that could not be defeated by old world values, for which people yet kill and die. This victory is sweet indeed.

To my thinking, the world of ideas has broken wide open. Everyone who has an idea can find someone with which to share it. Some will be in a position and will want to act on those ideas. The acquisition of knowledge, understanding and wisdom accelerates like it has not since the invention of the printing press. We have new hope in a world that seemed so determined to rob each of us of all hope. Now I bask not only in the possibilities of new and better ideas but the ever increasing likelihood of them. I have found a passion that eluded me for nearly 60 years. This is free marketing such as never before existed. I am so happy!

Ed Howes sought and found, knocked and entered. Now he sees things differently. To see more of what he sees, please visit

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