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# **Making money from travel websites**

By Mike Henry



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**Thank you for downloading my ebook. I would love to hear any feedback on what you think about it, either positive or negative. Please also send me suggestions on how I might be able to improve this guide and I will happily give you acknowledgment in the next updated version.**

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## **Introduction**

Travel and making money – the two activities may seem mutually exclusive, but I would like to show you how you can make money from tourism and travel using the internet. This guide is not a ‘get rich scheme’. At worst, you could make some money to help fund your travel or provide an additional stream of income, at best it could lead to becoming a full-time business where you can work and travel at your leisure.

More people are turning to the internet to both research travel destinations and make online bookings. You can profit from both. Guidebooks are often written by one person as they travel around a city or country. By the time the text is written up, edited and published, it can be more than a year before it is published. Places can change very quickly in a year.

When people think normally of careers which allow them to travel full-time, most people think of travel writing or travel photography. Travel writers will be the first to admit, that their profession does not pay much. I am going to guide you through how you can make money with travel by using the internet. Not just one time payments like what you would get if you submitted an article to a travel magazine, but **ongoing passive income, even when you have stopped traveling.**

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I am going to show you how I was able to build a city travel and tourist guide, which now generates me enough money to live off full-time. Please understand, however it does take a lot of work and time before you actually start making money.

If you are interested in travel and making money, this ebook is for you.

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## **My story**

I started my first websites while I was living in Japan in 2005. My first online ventures was trading on Ebay. I bought Japanese antiques at local markets and online and sold them to people in the U.S. I had a lot of fun doing it was a good way to learn about doing business on the internet.

I loved researching products to trade and seeing one of my auctions go into a bidding war. When you start dealing in antiques and collectibles a whole new world opens up. I couldn't believe what some people would pay for certain things.

What I hated though was doing the packaging and going back and forth to the post office. I was selling around US\$2000 a month and had dreams of becoming a power seller. Summer came around and eventually just couldn't be bothered going to the post office anymore.

I spent a great deal of time on the internet and I can't remember exactly how I came across it, but I found out about "affiliate programs". I couldn't believe it how I could make money by selling other people's products and services. I started a website on Tokyo and had a lot of fun researching and writing for the website.

I researched various affiliate programs and put up links on my websites. I think then I still wasn't so sure I would make money from it. I will never forget when I got my first cheque in the mail. I think that was the point where I could see the potential of affiliate marketing. I had to put in time to research and put up the website, but once it was done I could keep making money from it.

My life literally changed when I discovered the website [www.webmasterworld.com](http://www.webmasterworld.com) I had access to the internet at my work, so in my free time I spent reading everything on that site. I had always wanted to run my

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own business and like many people I had millions of different ideas but wasn't willing to risk my savings on starting a business. The beauty of the internet was that I could start a website for practically nothing and the only risk was my time.

If it is so easy to make money online why isn't everyone doing it, I hear you ask. If you go to any webmaster forum you will find thousands of people who are making money online, but still it is only a small fraction of the population. My friends and family still have a great difficulty understanding exactly how I make money.

I have convinced a couple of people to start their own sites and some of them have even gone to the trouble of registering a domain. I have gone back and checked how their site is going a few months later and it is still a blank page.

I suppose the problem for most people it takes time and effort. It is probably easier for them to show up to a job Monday to Friday and live off their paycheck. When I started out I worked on my websites when I got home from work and on the weekends. I enjoyed it so much it never actually felt like work. If you do something you have a passion for you won't have to work a day in your life. If typing on a computer, taking pictures, marketing your websites and traveling to exotic places sounds boring and hard work, you can stop reading here!

## **Why create a travel based site**

I have several different websites on different topics, but my main focus and source of income is from travel websites.

One of the first sites I created was [Tokyo Essentials](#) which I started when I was living in Tokyo. There are many different ways to make money on the internet, travel guides is just one of them. If you are reading this, you are probably also

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interested in travel, but a lot of the information in this book can easily be applied to help you to create websites on other topics.

If you are already interested in travel, it can make sense to create a travel based site. Of course there are many different niches within travel. Many people will tell you the importance of creating a website in an area that you have knowledge, an interest in or even a passion for. It is easy to spot websites where the operators have a true passion for what they are doing. However, I would also like to cover why I believe creating a travel based website is an excellent sector to make money in.

The online travel industry is one of the fastest growing areas on the internet. Check out these statistics from tia.org (2004 figures which are a little out of date now, but the figures should only increase).

*“The Internet and online services are very popular with travelers. Travelers tend to be quite computer savvy, with two thirds (65%) of the 98.3 million travelers who are online-63.8 million-using the Internet to make travel plans in 2004. Among online frequent travelers, 70 percent use the Internet for travel planning. Use of the Internet to actually book travel continues to increase, with 45 percent of all travelers now online having made travel reservations on the Internet during the past year. That translates to 44.6 million online travel bookers, up six percent over 2003. The majority (83%) of online bookers are using the Internet to do at least half of all their travel booking. The number of online bookers doing all of their travel booking online continues to grow, with 40 percent now doing so, versus 29 percent in 2003. Interestingly, 82 percent of online travel bookers say they bought airline tickets for a trip taken in the past year, 67 percent booked overnight lodging accommodations, and 40 percent made rental car reservations.”*

Before the internet people mostly used newspapers, guide books, magazines, information from friends and of course travel agents.



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Travel articles in printed material are usually a single author's experience at a particular time. Travel articles in print publications tend to also be part informative and partly entertaining. What you are often left with is a fairly rosy version of a particular place, with just enough detail to whet your appetite.

Travel agents work almost entirely from commission. The places they recommend are often where they receive the highest commissions. Their traveling is often limited to places to resorts which they receive generous discounts to, but you will have to pay the full price.

Guide books are generally a good source of information, but the information contained in them can get out of date very quickly. They are generally researched for anywhere up to a year, written and later published. It is not surprising that conditions of a particular place can change dramatically – prices go up and down, restaurants change chefs and hotels can fall out of favor.

The internet offers travel information to be edited and updated in a real-time basis. Errors in a guidebook have to be fixed in a subsequent edition. The internet also gives the ability for people to offer their own opinions and to seek advice. I will cover this later in the book as to how you can benefit from this with your own website, but it is important to understand that people want to hear from other people who have experienced what they are seeking, rather than a journalist on a free junket.

One of the reasons that Amazon has been successful is with its review system. People are able to give their own opinion as to what they thought of a book. In the past, we could only read a single review for example in a newspaper or magazine. Now we can read potentially hundreds of reviews.

I would recommend reading a book "[The Wisdom of the Crowds](#)", by James Surowiecki. The main premise of the book is that when large numbers of

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ordinary people give their opinion regarding a future event, the majority thought is fairly consistent with the final outcome of the event and generally more accurate than those of experts in the field.

There are already a few popular hotel review sites, but it is possible to create your own niche site. User review sites could work with restaurants, cruises, golf courses, diving spots, beach resorts and so on. I will cover later why user generated sites can work successfully and how you can make money from them.

### **Instant price comparison**

The other advantage the internet has with regards to travel is price comparison websites. Trying to find the cheapest airline and seat availability using travel agents can be a time consuming process. With airline booking sites you just have to enter your destination, dates and instantly you can find the cheapest price from a range of airlines. You can do similar price comparisons with hotels.

It is beyond the scope of this book to describe how you would create your own price comparison website. Although it is worth noting, that even if you do not have the technical skills, it is possible to outsource the development.

Of course, you do not necessarily have to create your own price comparison engine to make money. Most of the popular websites have affiliate programs which you can make money for visitors you refer. We will be covering affiliate programs later in the book.

### **Targeted traffic**

People use the internet for a number of reasons, sometimes they are doing research and sometimes they are just looking for entertainment. Popular entertainment sites can receive huge amounts of traffic, but since people are

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