



Public Domain: Turning Ideas to Dollar\$

The term “public domain” stems from the word “public.” And when someone says “public,” what comes up to mind? Of course, we know already that the word is synonymous to “people” – that means, *everyone*.

So when you describe something as public, like when you say “public domain,” it actually means that that particular domain belongs to everyone. Ergo, free.

Public domain refers to anything that the people can freely use. It may refer to areas like community parks, playgrounds, unprotected natural land or wilderness areas, and buildings and structures like shopping malls or downtown squares.

As long as any one can stay at a place without fear of being accused of trespassing or loitering, then that place is considered public domain.

In addition to places, public domain may also refer to creative works. In legal parlance, this means *intellectual property*, or anything that results from the creative genius of man. This includes books, movies, art works, paintings, music, images, photographs, trademarks, and more.

All of this is normally protected by copyright laws, of course. However, copyright protection is not forever. Because of this, some people refer to it as “limited monopoly.” For they expire, too. Or, they were not applied on the particular body of intellectual property in the first place (i.e., works that were created before 1989).

Intellectual property that is not covered by copyright laws belongs to the public domain. Therefore, it is open to everyone who deems to use it.

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...So?

So you know what a public domain is and what it comprises, question is: WHAT NOW? What has this got to do with making money?

The answer is...EVERYTHING.

The knowledge of public domain works, blended well with good business savvy and sound entrepreneurial sense could very well mean turning ideas (it doesn't even have to be *your* ideas) into dollars.

How?

Indeed, how?

You found the right place to ask that question. Because here, you will learn how to make public domain work for you in order to generate money.

Whether you are only out looking for some spare cash or hoping to establish the kind of big fortune most people only dream about, it is here that you will get your hands full with all the secrets involved.

Believe it. There is real money in the public domain. All you have to do is tap into the endless resources provided you by the Internet, and with a little help from us.

Specifically, here's what you will learn:

- How and where to find public domain works

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- How to prepare these public domain works for sale
- How to market products online
- Plus, links to essential web resources, articles, databases, free tools, and other hidden resources

How Do You Know If a Work is Public Domain?

Before anything else, the one thing you need to keep in mind about public domain is that you do not have to spend a single cent of *your* money to make profits. But you do have to conform to certain rules. It is only basic courtesy, after all.

The way public domain works depends on the country. There are sets of guidelines for each and these guidelines will help determine whether the copyright for a particular work has expired or no longer valid.

In the United States, there are three general rules that you need to know to help you assess and evaluate works. Your evaluation will serve as basis when you decide whether the works are in the public domain or not.

RULE #1: Works published in the United States before 1923 are considered public domain.

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This rule is cut and dried, and there are no exceptions. If the work was published, created, or produced prior to 1923, then it is in the public domain.

But what kinds of work are published before 1923? And would anyone still be even interested in them?

You might think the contrary but there are works published before the cut-off date that are still of some interest to the popular public. They may be “outdated;” however, this does not completely mean that they have outlasted their use. Some of them may still have relevant content and material in them. Others remain entertaining – a timeless factor, one that makes up the classics that we are so fond of.

With a little work and a good nose for value, you will find yourself sitting on a gold mine in no time.

RULE #2: Works created after March 1, 1989, even if not published, are copyright protected for 70 years after the author’s death. Works made for hire (corporate authorship) after March 1, 1989 are copyright protected for 120 years from creation or 95 years from publication, whichever is sooner.

This rule, of course, means that you do not have to actively file for copyright notice to come under the protection of the copyright law. Under this rule, all creative work produced after March 1, 1989 becomes automatically covered.

Now, for the second part of the rule.

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What is this about works made for hire? The phrase “works made for hire” actually refers to publications issued for and by a corporation so that in effect, the legal author turns out to be the employer-corporation. That is why they are sometimes collectively referred to as “corporate authorship” and may include anything from newsletters to employee manuals, annual reports to instructional texts.

Works made for hire may also cover any situation wherein a creative professional is paid to produce a work within the scope of his own employment.

RULE #3: Works published in the United States between 1923 and March 1, 1989 are also copyright protected, provided that the formalities are observed.

These formalities include notice of copyright, registration, and/or renewal. Failure to observe these formalities means that the work is in the public domain. On the other hand, if you comply with the requirements, then your work is under copyright protection.

So, to summarize, you know that a particular work is public domain if it comes under any of the following conditions:

- Published before 1923
- Published between 1923 and 1978 without a valid copyright notice
- Published between 1978 and March 1, 1989, without a notice and registration

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- Published between 1923 and 1963 with a copyright notice but author failed to renew it (*According to a report, only 7% of copyrights issued through 1958 were renewed*)

However, a work is *not* public domain if any of the following conditions apply:

- Published between 1923 and 1963 with a copyright notice, properly renewed before its expiration for the first 23-year protection term
- Published between 1963 and March 1, 1989 with a valid copyright notice
- Published or created any time after March 1, 1989 (*Works after this date are deemed automatically under copyright protection*)

So, now that you know how to identify a public domain work when you see one, it is time for you to figure out where to find them. Fortunately for you, you do not have to look far.

The good thing about computers and having an Internet connection is that almost everything – information, books, music, music scores, films, photographs, artwork, images, almost every kind of creative work, in fact - is but a mouse click away. Read on to find out where you can start generating cash from public domain.

Where Can You Find Public Domain Works?

Hey, the works are public so they should not be that hard to find. Right?

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Absolutely!

In fact, there are literally millions of works, well-known or not, that are considered public property. The only thing is that people don't realize they are free to use. You, on the other hand, well, now you know.

Many much-loved classic literatures are public domain. Many non fiction works, write-ups on a wide variety of topics, silent films, classic grainy black and white films, vintage cartoons and comics, even beloved songs are considered public domain. You may even instantly recognize some of these works.

Basically, remember **Rule #1**, that all works published before 1923 are public domain.

There are two basic methods you have in order to find public domain works.

The first is classic **DIY** or do-it-yourself. This method is not very fast and will probably not yield that many results, but it will cost you virtually nothing. The other method is the **paid way**, wherein you pay a certain fee to a third party who will do all the research for you.

Whichever one you prefer, you may still want to know how to locate public domain works.

The High-Tech Way

This is probably the best option you have, and the most likely one you will choose. Why? Well, because...*Internet*....

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Where would we be if there was no Internet? Probably sitting at home, twiddling our thumbs, our minds and bums going numb.

Seriously, the Internet is one great source of public domain works. What is more, it is available to anyone, as long as you have the knowledge and the patience to plow through the great amount of information that the World Wide Web regularly churns out.

But the Internet is big, huge, HUMONGOUS! Where do you start?

- **Turn on the Engine**

Search engines seem as good a place as any to start looking for public domain works. They are websites that allow you to perform simplified online search with the use of powerful Internet search tools called *searchbots*.

Google remains to be the most popular and effective, though it is a relatively new face in the search engine industry (*It burst into the market a little more than ten years ago, back when Amazon and Ebay ruled the online marketplace.*)

However, if you want more results, try doing the same search using multiple search engines, like **Altavista**, **Dogpile**, **Yahoo**, and **MSN**.

For a list of more search engines, you can even do a search on “search engines” first, jot them all down, then do your search for “public domain”

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on each one of them. For sure, it is going to be a lot of work, but such is the fact when you are trying to yield as many results as you can.

For starters, use the following keywords when searching:

- public domain music
- public domain images
- public domain books
- public domain movies
- public domain works
- public domain library
- public domain software

You can get plenty more variations of the keyword by using tools like **Google's Keyword Tool** (previously known as "sandbox"). It would be interesting to vary your keyword sometimes for more search possibilities.

*****A word to the wise -- It is probably not a very good idea trusting just any site that comes up during your search.***

Generally, information coming from the Library of Congress is much more reliable than those coming from websites with tacky titles like "My Friend's Cousin's Pet's Vet's Husband's Homemade Recipe for Business

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Success.” If the exact same title comes up in more than one search, then that work is probably public domain, but it is always good to verify first.

- **Talk it Out**

Besides regular websites, public domain works are also available in boards with public posting access, e.g. forums, message boards, and e-groups. Just do a search for “public domain forum,” substituting “forum” with message boards, list, group, news, community, etc.

*****Just remember:** Before you join any group, forum, or community, browse through the forum posts and member profiles first to determine if the members are easy to talk with and are not averse to answering questions (okay, a lot of questions) from newbies like you.*

- **Go Right to the Source**

When you do your search for public domain works, you will find that many libraries and groups today are offering you a wide range of creative works all in public domain. Countless copies of works without copyright protection are digitized, archived in online databases, and made freely available to the public.

According to them, this is to help ensure that the information these types of work contain are freely available to scholars, educators, students, and the general public.

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As a tip, you can use the following direct links to resource sites for more public domain goodness (*Remove all words not in **bold** [and replace with the appropriate symbol] as well as all spaces*):

- **HTI (dot) umich (dot) edu (slash) p (slash) pd-modeng (slash) bibl (dot) html** – This is where you can get publicly available modern English collection from the Humanities Text Initiative, a unit of the University of Michigan’s Digital Library Production Service.
- **Bartleby (dot) com** – For a collection of online reference books, this site is the place to go. It also contains literature (fiction and non fiction), verse, quotations, and books in the public domain.
- **Ibiblio (dot) org** – A collaborative project between the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill’s MetaLab and the Center for the Public Domain, Ibiblio.org is a database of freely available information, including software, music, literature, art, history, science, politics, and cultural studies.
- **Readprint (dot) com** – As a *free* online library, this site offers thousands of free books that a student, teacher, or even the classic enthusiast can use completely without charge. It has an author index which allows you to read free biographical information about them.
- **Gutenberg (dot) org** – Currently up to 18,000 free public domain e-books available from classic literature, treatises, notes, to discourse and all of it in downloadable e-format.

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- **Retrofilm (dot) com** – An online catalogue of film works in the public domain, including movies, television, shows, cartoons, musicals, documentaries, and more. The site, however, does not provide copies of film footage to private individuals as it is mainly a service for television broadcast companies. However, you can use the site to search for titles and then go look for copies of them somewhere else.

The Traditional Way

If, for some reason, the Internet does not work for you, never fear. A better than good alternative is a public library.

Unlike the Internet, public libraries are the one source of public domain works that is absolutely free. That's because with the Internet method, you need to have a computer and an Internet connection before you can do any actual work – all of which can cost you money.

But, when it comes to public libraries, you can just drive over there and zip and zap and just like that! You have the information you want.

Another advantage that public libraries have over the Internet is that there is always someone to help you do your search. The one thing that the Internet does not have but public libraries do is a librarian.

Most librarians are quite knowledgeable about the collection their libraries have and are usually willing to help you find exactly what you're looking for.

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If the public library near you is a local one, it would probably help if you make a list of questions you might have and approach the librarian first as you enter. If the library is state or city-run, the library staff members probably have neither the time nor resources to devote personal attention to your needs while there are also other patrons.

If that is the case, you can pretty much handle your own search through library archives without need of outside help. Just pick any subject you want and scan the library shelf for shelf. It helps if you look for older books relating to the topic as they are likely already in the public domain.

Alternatively, you can spend a lazy afternoon browsing through the card catalogue section until you hit something you like.

The good thing about card catalogues is that they usually contain the date of publication, and right near the beginning of the listing on the card, too. This makes identifying if the work was published before 1923 a simple matter.

After finding the public domain materials you need, you are now ready for the next step, which is how to prepare these public domain works for resale. One of the proven packaging methods to re-sell public domain works is through an e-book.

An **e-book** is a term that refers to an electronic or digital version of a book, although sometimes it is used to refer to a hardware device specifically designed to read digital copies of books.

How to Create an E-Book

There are many approaches to creating an e-book. For instance, you can make an e-book by simply reproducing an exact copy of a public domain work, and there are many ways to go about this:

- You can obtain a digital copy of the complete book and redistribute it;
- Or you can scan the pages of the physical book yourself and compile them into one file (*usually in PDF format*)

An alternative would be to make changes to the public domain work. This is called “modernization,” which is really no more than rearranging the text or the presentation to make the content of the work appear new.

Whichever approach suits you, just remember to make your choice based on what is more convenient and easily accessible to you.

Creating E-Books with HTML

HTML stands for HyperText Markup Language. It is a type of web programming language which is the de facto script all web browsers are based on.

HTML lays the groundwork for the World Wide Web as most web pages are based on HTML files. In addition to that, HTML files, when compiled, also make

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up a considerable number of e-books. Plus, the script is so simple that you do not even have to learn it to generate an HTML code.

Here are some tools you can use to make an HTML-based e-book:

- **Word Processor** – This includes word processing programs like Microsoft Word. The “Save As” feature of most of these programs (usually found under the File option) will allow you to save the documents you write as HTML files. All you need to do is to make sure that the documents look exactly like how you want your e-book format to be, then click “Save.”
- **E-Book Creation Software** – If you are not comfortable using a word processing program to create HTML files, another option you have is an e-book creation software – a special program designed solely to generate or produce e-books.

E-book creation software ranges in price from free to a few hundred dollars. It is up to you if you are willing to spend your precious bucks for the extra features *paid software* usually have. Or perhaps, you are satisfied with the features you are already getting from the programs free of charge.

Most e-book creator programs are easy to use, which, of course, translates to increased productivity. Again, it is up to you which one you prefer.

If you feel that you can produce more e-books with an e-book creation software and you do not mind the extra cost so much, then go ahead. Whatever is more convenient for you.

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For starters, you can use the following e-book creator software samples to start creating e-books and start making profits:

- **eBook Compiler Software** – A free e-book creator available for download at eBookCompiler.com. Only after you have fully explored the system and tried out all its features and decide to start selling your e-books will you be asked to pay a one-time registration.
- **eBook Pack Express 1.7** – A free to try e-book creation software by Caislabs Software available at Download.com. The program is very user-friendly and supports HTML, JavaScript, Flash, MP3, and video files.

The beauty of e-books is that they can be easily downloaded from the Internet, whether direct from a website or as an email attachment. However, downloading can be slow for some consumers, especially if they are not using broadband connection.

E-books that are particularly long can take quite a long time to download and can be a source of hassle for your consumers. Aside from cutting your e-book into mini, easy to download file sizes (which would totally defeat the whole purpose of having an e-book for a product in the first place), the best option you have is to **zip your e-book into an archive**. This will compress your e-book into a smaller file and will make it easy to download.

How to Turn E-Books into Money-Making Machines

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And now for the good part...

As previously mentioned, there is real money in public domain. You only have to figure out how best to go about it, and lucky for you, you don't even have to think very hard because everything you need to know you will learn from right here.

There are a number of methods you can choose as your main course of action when you turn public domain works into a money making business. Some require a lot of involvement from you personally, while others are more lenient. It is your choice.

However, as a general rule of thumb, effort begets profit. So the more effort you put into something, the more profit you will receive.

You may have heard people making all sorts of claims on how e-books and public domain works can make you an instant millionaire.

Whatever you do, do not fall for this trap. No one becomes a millionaire overnight. Not, unless you bought the winning lottery ticket for tomorrow, and even then, the odds are one in a billion.

Well, sure, there is some decent money in public domain works. Armed with the right knowledge about the process and the willingness to invest time and effort into building a fortune, then there is no reason why you cannot turn this idea into dollars.

*****A word to the wise:*** *It is a smart entrepreneur who tries to build a fortune on a project that he or she has some personal interest in. Chances are that you will be dealing with a vast amount of materials and performing a lot of prep work, marketing and sales. Most of these you will find you will have to do*

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yourself. If you are unable to exhibit passion for your own work, then how can you expect the same from your consumers? In the end, even a little passion for your business can go a long way.

Need Proof?

Alright, so there are claims that public domain works can be profitable, but most of these claims are clearly overboard and nothing more than a myth. However, this should not become your reason for believing that everything about profit from public domain is a lie.

The truth is, it is not. And if you want proof, take the following fine examples of persons who made it big because of public domain works and a little thing called “imagination”:

Walt Disney

No, you did not read wrong. We are talking about the “magic” man himself.

Mr. Walt Disney has made a billion dollar fortune on timeless stories that we have always loved, no matter how many times we have heard or read them or how many revisions the tales have undergone. His entire empire is built on characters of these stories, making everything from movies, TV shows, songs, music scores, theme parks, and so much more.

His source? The Grimm Brother’s Collection of Fairy Tales – a public domain work. What Disney did was essentially copy them, tweaked around with the

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characters' names, rewrote a happy ending, slapped the whole thing on a piece of film, added some music, and voila! He opened to us a whole new world of magic while he made profit out of it.

Ted Turner

He owns the Turner Classic Movies (TCM), a cable network that earns millions of dollars a year in gross profits. And that is only for advertising. Because most of the movies broadcasted on TCM are classic films that have long since entered the public domain, Ted Turner only pays a very minimal cost when broadcasting.

This is a far cry from other broadcast stations who must shell out millions to pay for royalties and other fees.

As a shrewd businessman, Ted Turner saw the opportunity of a lifetime that public domain offered – re-distributing copyright-free works and earning a fortune as a consequence.

You will find many more examples of rags-to-riches stories around public domain re-selling. Who said this kind of stories only exist in fairy tales? You can create your own fairy tale, too, by turning public domain ideas into dollars.

So far, here's what you learned:

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- You know what public domain works are and know how to identify them based on the three basic rules.
- You know what the sources of public domain works are, whether online and offline.
- You know how to create an e-book based on your knowledge of HTML and with help from an e-book creation software.

After choosing one or two works from the public domain that incites your passion, now is the time for you to generate sales. Here are some tips to help you:

Re-sell, Re-distribute, and Reap In the Profits

One of the easiest ways to earn money from public domain e-books, *duplicating the exact content of public domain works and re-selling them* can be a great way to start your business. You essentially do not have to spend a lot on material.

Since the product is already in the public domain, there are no royalties and no worries about copyright infringement. You do not even have to get permission from the original author in order to excerpt, reprint, or advertise their products.

You can make as many copies as you want of the original public domain work, convert them into downloadable e-book format (*See previous section for instructions on how to create an e-book*) and you would be all set to start re-selling, re-distributing, and reaping in the profits.

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All in all, it sure is one easy way of earning money, literally without spending a cent.

Give E-Books a Face-lift and Make Money All the While

Have you noticed how successful companies these days keep on packaging and re-packaging their products over and over?

Essentially, it is the same product but because of the face-lift, they somehow get it into the minds of their consumers that it is a wholly new and different product.

Walt Disney even made use of this great business strategy. He came up with a new way of telling old fairy tales, giving the stories a wholly refreshing feel to them. You can do this, too, with an old public domain story.

Just choose the public domain work you want. Create a revised edition of it and then *sell it as your own*. Or, make as many revisions as you can until what emerges is a product that is so completely radical from the original though both are still essentially similar, then file for a copyright notice, and the work becomes another original.

Sell this new work as your own and earn royalties from distributors. Additionally, because of the copyright protection attached it, no one else can copy your ideas. This means the work is completely yours – free for your use, private or otherwise.

Giving public domain works a face-lift does not take a creative genius to do it. So do not feel intimidated by it all.

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The whole thing can be simple; just change the format of a work by doing any or all of the following:

- Make the type face cleaner;
- Make the text more attractive by arranging them into sidebars and tables. This would make the content so much easier to read than blocked text arranged in a boring, monotonous paragraph;
- Add graphics, headings, or color texts;
- Make a few actual changes to the text, either by adding new material or subtracting unnecessary lines.

After all that, your book or e-book is now considered officially “revised” and you can start redistributing them through your own website or webpage or through large publishing sites like Amazon.com.

*****NOTE:*** *If you only made minor revisions to a public domain work and did not make any actual changes to the context, then it is not advisable to file for a separate copyright notice for the “new” work. If you must protect your product, then use the protection feature that most e-book creation software offer – one that makes it possible for you to protect your files from major theft and tampering.*

Recreate Public Domain Images and Sell Them

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Besides modernizing public domain text, another alternative you have is to recreate copyright-free images. Again, you do not have to be an artist to do this sort of thing. You do, however, probably need to know a little about digital art software like Photoshop or Corel Draw.

With the help of a good image editing software, you can make alterations in a public domain image, depicting tired old works like the Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* or Picasso's *Woman in front of the Mirror* in a humorous twist.

In fact, there may already be several funny depictions of these works circulating the net – propaganda posters like the US Government's *We Can Do It!*, Leonardo da Vinci's *The Vitruvian Man*, and many more. These images are in the public domain so they are free for use by the public any which way they want.

And once you have a collection of these “modernized” public domain images, you can group them and then publish them as themed calendars, posters, bumper stickers, coffee mugs, or other gift items. You can even print your products and sell them online as t-shirts, hats, book bags, cards, and more.

There are two ways of going about this. You can either hire a company that specializes in promotional products. Have them make an inventory of all your altered public domain images so you can store them and ship them whenever a buyer decides to purchase from your site. Or, you can enlist the services of a Print on Demand company like Café Press or Lulu and let them reproduce or reprint copies of your public domain images.

Resell E-Books through Affiliate Programs

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Alright so your e-book based on a public domain work is selling, but you find that it is not selling fast enough. What to do?

In the world of business, one of the best tested methods of achieving success is to sell and sell it fast, before others decide to join the bandwagon and you find yourself dividing the market among yourselves. Well, that is probably inevitable, but if you want to get the best slice of the cake, you need to be quicker than the rest.

Think on your toes and always, always look for better alternatives that promise bigger profits.

The same thing goes with e-book reselling. If you want to make maximum profit out of your hard work, look for other alternatives. Most successful e-book resellers have turned to affiliate programs to generate more income. They use these programs as another avenue to increase their products' exposure and hopefully turn more people into potential buyers as a result.

You can do this, too.

Basically, affiliate programs work this way: You offer your public domain-based e-book as a reseller or affiliate program. When someone else comes along and decides to purchase a copy of your e-book, he can then sell the e-book for an unlimited number of times. And because the work is sold under *his* own name, he gets 100% of all the profits.

But what about you?

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Well, you do not have to worry because when he purchased your work, you already gained your profit. This method is also called “franchising” or “turnkey” and it can be very rewarding if you play your cards well.

Generally, if you make an initial investment in a reseller or affiliate program, it will cost you anywhere around a hundred dollars. Once you have laid down the ground work, at least in terms of finances, the only other investments you have to make are time and energy.

Selling and marketing your product by yourself is going to be very difficult. That is because the market is so huge it is a lot like standing in a room full of crowds. There is no telling buyers will even notice where you are standing and get interested in the product you are selling. You need to take the active part.

Give yourself an edge in sales and marketing by using a franchising operation with the following added tips:

- Charge less than the average selling price of the product. This is one sure-fire way to undercut the competition and thus give your product a boost in terms of buyer attractiveness.
- Make sure your sales website looks professional and clean. Avoid any clutter. Your product description and all text found in your site should be easy to read and offers fresh content.
- Under no circumstances should you make any blatant marketing hype in your website. This will only sour the customer’s opinion of you, considering how many scams and con artists profit by fooling their clients with too much hype.

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- Create an e-book from another public domain work, preferably on a related or similar topic, then offer it as a free bonus alongside the affiliate product.

If you do all these things, your buyers are going to think they hit the jackpot, and they sure did if you play your cards right. And in the mean time, you are sitting back and reaping the rewards for all your excellent business sense.

Redistribute Public Domain Works on eBay

You have probably heard of eBay, maybe even tried selling on it once or twice or bought something off the shops. Now, it is not unusual to hear about people making money on eBay. As a matter of fact, you might have noticed there are a lot of eBay users who are considered PowerSellers. That means they are earning at least \$1,000 a month and to think that most of them consider this only as a hobby.

With a little work, you can become a PowerSeller, too.

Right now, eBay is one of the most powerful website for selling products to the world. Based on auction-style selling, buyers can bid on a product they want to buy and wait for their bid to be accepted. Either that or they can agree to pay the set selling fee.

If you already have an account on eBay, then all you have to do now is to list your public domain products there. If you do not yet have an account, signing up is very easy and the eBay website takes you every step of the way.

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There are also a lot of tutorials and tips to help you increase your sales on eBay. You can find some of them here:

- **PCMag.com** – The site has a good article on how to make money on eBay called *10 Hot eBay Tips*. Just go over to the site and browse through their Solutions section. Alternatively, you can also take advantage of the search tool and type in your research topic on the space provided.
- **AuctionInsights.info** – The site has a lot of tools and tips that eBay users can use, whether you are a buyer or a seller. In addition to that, there is also a Free eBay Template Creator to help you make your eBay shop look more attractive to buyers.
- **Entrepreneur.com** – The site has many useful articles and resources to help entrepreneurs handle the processes involved in running a business. From start ups to homebiz, franchise to bizopps, money to marketing, the site has tons of tips to give you a boost up on your public domain business.

Make CD Versions of Public Domain Works

Repackaging public domain works could also take the form of CDs. Even if you are not particularly fond of this option, you will probably have to do this anyway as people will tend to look for physical products.

It has something to do with tangible stuff; people want to be able to touch the products that they buy.

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Producing physical copies of your public domain products is not that difficult. Sure, it can be a hassle having to buy blank CDs and getting a CD-burning software to create CDs. But if you manage it well, you may even hire a separate company to do all this for you.

CD versions of public domain works are especially profitable if you are making revisions or updates on an existing product.

Make Public Domain Music, Movies, and Software Available for Download

If there is anything at all that is consistently popular as downloadable products, it is multimedia, like music, movies, and film clips. Software also comes in as a close second.

People will always look for products like these. So the opportunity for making more profit has already been laid out for you. Now, all you have to do is to grab it.

As mentioned, a lot of all time favorites are already in the public domain. Make an online catalogue of all these public domain works, separating them into categories for search convenience. To give your inventory a fresh look, update often. That way, people will keep coming back for more.

To make this work, you will need a special software that creates online storefronts or shopping carts. The software will make it easy for you to keep track of the multiple downloads, sales, and other files. Additionally, the storefront will make your electronic inventory secure, *and* keep your buyers safe.

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As an added bonus, you can also sell CD copies of public domain music and movies right alongside the downloadable product. It may require a higher initial investment. However, you will find that it will be worth it, considering how some people are still wary of downloading anything from the Internet. This way, you give your buyers another option to get a hold of your products.

So now that you know all the tips and tricks involved in selling, re-selling, distributing and re-distributing public domain-based e-books, what other options do you have?

After all, this public domain business is supposed to be virtually limitless, right? So, is this all that you can do?

What if the e-book thing did not work? Even after countless revisions and editing work and even after offering it as a reseller or affiliate product. Try hard as you might, you just cannot seem to have enough people to notice your work and get them interested enough to buy it.

Do not fool yourself into thinking that once you have created an e-book and followed all the steps, the dollars are just going to start flowing in. A business is never that easy. Usually, it will take time – a heck of a lot of time and much waiting and hard work. In the mean time, what are you going to do?

Just sit around and wait forever?

Again, take the active part and *do* something. So the e-book is not selling. Fine. What else is out there?

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Perfect question. Read on to find out.

How to Convert your E-Book into Article Series or E-Courses

Face it. Not everyone will find a book-length public domain work very appealing. Not even if you make the most attractive e-book cover in the world and sell your product at half the usual cost. The best that you can do with that method is probably raise a few eyebrows but no more.

It has been frequently observed that most online users are browsers and scanners. That means they do not spend too much time on a particular page and usually just skip through the content until they get to the part they are looking for.

Translated even further, this means that you can probably get them to pay much closer attention to what you have to say if you state it in the clearest, briefest, and most concise manner possible.

Now, “concise” is probably the last word you are going to use to describe an e-book. That is the nature of books: they are long. So do not wonder then if some people are not willing to invest their money on something they will probably only going to skim through.

How do you solve this dilemma?

By cutting your e-book into articles to create a whole series about several portions of the same topic.

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This method particularly works if your e-book is non-fiction or self-help. You can separate your e-book into segments and offer them to your readers as a series or an e-course which they can subscribe to.

Making your e-book content subscription-based might very well be the exact thing you have been looking for in order to sell your public domain works.

Below are some easy tricks to do the job:

Slice and Dice

First, review the entire book and see if you can separate them into smaller portions. Remember that the segments must be separated in such a way that their logic is not destroyed.

Self-contained segments look similar to articles you often stumble on while surfing the web. Anywhere from 400-700 words will do, but a good length for an article series or an e-course installment is generally three to five full-size pages long. This way, the article will be just long enough to contain the “meat” but short enough so as not to intimidate your readers, or worse, bore them to tears.

Cutting up an e-book will probably be easier to do if the book is already divided into chapters. That way, you only have to take it section by section and do minor revisions to keep the context of a particular segment intact.

If, however, your e-book is not already separated, then separate them according to where a particular idea or subject ends and where the next begins.

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Sometimes, the chapters or sub-chapters are going to be too long or too short. If that is the case, then pull up your sleeves and get to work as some creative shuffling is required to make the whole thing work.

Attract More Flies with Honey

Ever heard that line before?

Well, it is true. Anything that is attractive will certainly garner attention. And anything that looks drab has the tendency to get ignored.

The same applies with your public domain article series and e-courses, too.

If given the choice, would you rather read an article titled “Lawn Care” or one that reads “How to Make Your Lawn the Source of Envy in Your Neighborhood”? How about “Making a Flower Garden” to “10 Easy Steps to Make Your Own Backyard Oasis”?

Of *course*, you would choose the latter titles. That is just how things go. Interesting – better yet, *intriguing* – headings and titles are a sure-fire solution to capturing your readers.

Sure, one may not judge a book by its cover, but there is no saying that says you cannot judge an article by its title. The fact of the matter is that we most often do rely on the title to determine whether an article is worth reading.

Many public domain e-books and e-courses name their installments simply as Chapter 1, Chapter 2 or Lesson 1, Lesson 2. It is practically, you have to admit,

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but would you be interested? Speaking from a completely objective observer's point of view, of course. It is safe to assume that you would not.

Do not make that mistake with your e-book articles and e-courses. Try to go over the whole segment and determine what it is all about. Then, come up with a catchy line that defines the subject matter while at the same time captivates your readers' attention.

This can only have a positive effect on your business. If you post a list of the article titles of your series or a lesson plan of your e-course, readers will get drawn in and buy your stuff. This means more purchases and more income for you.

Put Up Some Links

The core of web marketing is link building. Links open you up to new resources. Links lead you to a wide variety of information. Links generate both incoming and outgoing traffic. *And* links can make potential buyers out of regular Internet surfers.

That is how vital links are to the World Wide Web. The question is: What are you going to do to take advantage of that fact?

Adding links to your e-course should not be that hard. Just make a quick search on Google and review a few sites to choose which ones are good enough to add more value to your product. Your readers are going to be thankful for making it so much easier for them. Because you did all the hard work beforehand, they can just smoothly click on these links for additional information.

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*****NOTE:** Some website owners will be grateful to you for providing their links and to show your gratitude they may even be willing to link back to you. Try to explore this aspect of link building and see what possibilities open up for you.*

Automate Everything

If you want to be able to send your e-course installments and article series in a timely manner, then you will need the invaluable help of an autoresponder. This is a special program that allows you to set up a mailing list of all your subscribers.

It also comes with a built-in scheduler so that when it is once again time for you to start sending out copies, the program will do that automatically without needing any prompt from you.

Autoresponders will also help you keep track of all your subscribers, their emails, and sign up details. This makes everything simpler. Less hassle means more time for you to come up with new ways to make your business grow.

Try the following autoresponders to get started:

- **GetResponse.com** – A complete email marketing service, including autoresponders, follow-up campaigns, newsletter hosting and automatic sales tracking.
- **AWeber.com** – An autoresponder with a very user-friendly interface. Sign up can be done in three easy steps: (1) membership; (2) web form; (3) and create and send follow-up emails and newsletters.

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- **FreeAutobot.com** – A free autoresponder program that lets you send unlimited follow up emails with absolutely *zero* adverts. Again, signing up is done in three easy steps. The site gets its profits from advertisements on their own website, not on yours. That is why the product is free.
- **Autoreplying.com** – Another autoresponder tool, PromaSoft Autoresponder offers unlimited business email automation. It delivers mailings, follow up mailings, database support, data extraction, and more.

With all these autoresponder tools to choose from and plenty more if you do a thorough search of the web, then it should not take you long to get everything ready for delivery. Now, on to the next part...

Turn Visitors into Buyers

Okay, so now you have a website and everything has been set up – your public domain-based e-book neatly cut up into article series and e-course installments, your autoresponder ready. Visitors to your website start pouring in, but after a few weeks, a month, you notice: *Nothing's happening!*

These people are not buying. They do not even spare your product a second glance before they start leaving. This is one of the pitfalls of the Internet, actually. It is easy to find almost anything on any sort of topic and enter websites that specialize in that subject. However, it is also that easy to leave everything, in search...in constant search.

The question is: *How do you turn your visitors into buyers?*

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Because all visitors to your website are potential buyers. You only have to give them a little push to get them to make a purchase.

There are several ways to do this, of course. We can go on and on and on and on about how to make full use of the web to earn profits from your public domain work. But let us discuss the most effective method yet.

We have discussed about how we can attract more flies with honey. We have also discussed about nice, clean, and short to entice consumers to come back for more. However, all of this will only work if your product is exposed to the majority of the market. And you can do this by distributing the first few installments of your e-course to other newsletters, e-zines, articles archives, and even other websites.

When you do this, be sure to include a link back to your website. You can usually add this sort of information at the end of the sample installment. Also, somewhere in there, indicate that there is more to the series available at your site to let you readers know where they can get more.

Couple that with intense promotion on your own website and there is positively every reason that your little public domain project should start churning out money.

*****USEFUL HINT:*** *You may want to consider offering a “teaser” – that is, a lighter e-course that you can give away for free. Consider this a prelude to your main offering. And if you really write your e-course just so, it might just be enough to pique the readers’ interest and get them to come back for a bigger bite.*

CONCLUSION

You have learned what public domain means and places where you can find most of these works. From here, you were able to pick out the public domain work or group of works that you feel passionate about, so much so that you are certain you can generate the same kind of interest in your buyers. You have also made sure, based on what you know about the three rules on copyright that the work is in the public domain. You have, therefore, nothing to worry, particularly about copyright issues.

Taking the example of many greats ahead of your time, you have prepared your product or products, getting them ready for reproduction and sale. Your website serves as your base where you make your product available to the whole world, but you also make use of other powerful marketing sites like eBay to create a portal for more buyers to pour in. You have built a web presence and your ideas have been solidified as you make an effort and invest time on this new venture of yours.

In the words of Lord Acton, one of the most illustrious historians in 19th century England: “Look at a day when you are supremely satisfied at the end. It’s not a day when you lounge around doing nothing; it’s when you’ve had everything to do, and you’ve done it.”

It has been done. *You* have done it – turned your ideas into dollars.

And now you are ready to make some money in the public domain.