



search blog |

Search



Web



ReveNews.com

Browse By Author



**ReveNews Guest Bloggers** come from a wide range of industry experts and backgrounds.

[ [View All Entries By ReveNews Guest Bloggers](#) ]

#### Guest Blogger Date Archives

[July 2006](#)

[May 2006](#)

[February 2006](#)

[August 2005](#)

[July 2005](#)

#### Guest Blogger Recent Entries

[The Profit in Altruism](#)

[Your Merchants Want You to Send Them Business for Free](#)

["Real" On-Line Entrepreneurs Don't Spend Ad Money](#)

[It's all architecture these days](#)

[The Villainies of Nature do swarm upon him...](#)

[The World is my ROFLCOPTER](#)

[Act Before You Think?](#)

["Make it so": in support of dictatorship](#)

[Deadlines and scope: success dependencies](#)

[Publishers unite to profile?](#)

## The Profit in Altruism

Filed under: [Online Marketing](#) - July 26, 2006

Wayne tells me; "You should do a guest blog. Tell what your script is, what it does, and why you give it away." "Cool," I said; "A soapbox where I can expound on my philosophy of life and rail against the capitalist nature of the human condition." To which he replied; "Remember that this is a professional marketing community, and you should probably relate what the benefits are that you get from the project." Darn, then I probably shouldn't use the term "Marketing Scum", should I?

We are in the marketing business. We are all, affiliates, merchants, and facilitators, here to make a profit. That's it, plain and simple. The primary question we all ask is; how can I make a profit? That's capitalism, that's a market based economy, it's a good thing. But we can do more; we can help each other; we can share our skills; we can work for the greater good. And maybe, just maybe, even make a little extra cash in the process.

My story is simple enough. I wanted to sell the bestselling books related to my website without having to constantly update the list to keep it current. So I wrote a script to automatically scrape the books off of Amazon's site and build a page listing those books on my site. When Amazon came out with XML Web Services I updated the script to consume that so that it would be more reliable and require even less maintenance. Surprisingly, for me anyways, this didn't make me instantly wealthy. I didn't find the profit I was looking for.

That is when it dawned on me that there might be another profit to be made other than just the affiliate fees. Maybe I could gain some self satisfaction from helping others, maybe I could gain some measure of fame, and maybe I could kick my Google PR up to 7! Slapping an Open Source license at the top of the script, and a link back to my site on the bottom, I gave the script away. I spent a few days posting it to various script collection websites and then sat back and waited to see what happened.

It turns out that there were other webmasters looking for an automated solution to maintaining their websites and they started downloading. It wasn't long before downloads reached about 30 per day. Not many, but it has sustained that rate for over 4 years. Do the math, tens of thousands of downloads, many, many thousands of sites all linking back to mine.

I'm under an NDA with Amazon so I can't give you any real numbers about how much business goes to them through my script but I will say that it's enough that they noticed, they know my name. And so do thousands of webmasters throughout the world. I've seen the script translated into Estonian and have helped a user convert currency into Ringgit for Malaysia. I've made friends from Louisiana to Germany, from the UK to Australia.

Even if we ignore the warm and fuzzy feeling from helping others, the new found friends, the minor profit gained from users not having enough sense to replace my affiliate id with their own, and the mischievous joy of flooding Google. We are still left with the profit of enormous public relations goodwill. As any corporation knows; goodwill is a valuable asset to have, especially among potential customers. By giving a single script away I've made a name for myself as an expert in consuming web services and providing easy to use tools for webmasters. These webmasters are now all potential customers who are already familiar with the quality of my work. They're an easy sell for any affiliate tools that I may choose to market in the future. I didn't start this project with the goal of creating a customer base, it just happened. I did something for the benefit of others and I've gained something in the process. Don't be afraid to give something away, to turn down a potential profit point. Think about what you can do to help your targeted market segment and you'll get something out of it too, even if it is just a warm and fuzzy feeling inside. You don't have to monetize every action to realize a profit.

Winston Churchill once said; "You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give." I'm not as eloquent, I would say to you that; "Sometimes it pays not to be scum."

MrRat

[Author of Amazon Products Feed](#)

[Permalink](#)

[Email this](#)

[Add to del.icio.us](#)

[Comments \(1\)](#)



[VIEW ALL FEEDS](#)

713 readers  
BY FEEDBURNER

REVENEWS  
MARKETPLACE

GoldenCAN™  
Data Feed Integration  
GOLDENCAN DATAFEED  
INTEGRATION

neverblueAds  
JOIN THE NEVERBLUEADS  
AFFILIATE NETWORK

SCIENCE EDUCATION  
AFFILIATE NETWORK  
SCIENCE EDUCATION AFFILIATE  
NETWORK - JOIN TODAY

AFFILIATE PROGRAMS AND  
MANAGEMENT BY AMWSO.COM -  
VISIT TODAY



### Landing Page Handbook

How to Raise Conversions  
—Data & Design Guidelines

- Design rules for all the basics: columns, hero shot, font size, copy length & more
- 59 real-life creative samples of what worked and what didn't
- Learn which copy people read and what they don't look at

*Step-by-step instructions to increase your conversions up to 40%* [Click Here](#)

## Trackback Pings

TrackBack URL for this entry:  
<http://www.revenews.com/MT/mt-tb.cgi/1937>

Read the [ReveNews Comment Policy](#) before you comment.

Subscribe to ReveNews RSS to Email Updates! [Click here.](#)

## Comments On This Entry

Rot. We owe nothing to others but to respect their right to freedom; the freedom to pursuit profit you so snidely disdain.

**Posted by: Jeff Perren at July 27, 2006 04:24 PM**

---

## Share Your Comments

Name:

Email Address:

URL:

Remember Me?  Yes  No

Email me replies to this entry:

Comments: (you may use HTML tags for style)

Security Code:

547041


## Email This Entry

Email this entry to:

Your email address:

Message (optional):

---



Send