

4 STEPS TO LOCATION INDEPENDENCE



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Introduction

Thank you for downloading my Free Guide to Location Independence!

If we haven't already met, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Christopher Dodd, or perhaps better known as Chris the Freelancer.

A Little about Me

At the start of 2015, I discovered an article called [12 Startups in 12 Months](#) written about an entrepreneur by the name of [Pieter Levels](#). Within the article, I discovered the term 'Digital Nomad' and rapidly made the decision that I would become a Digital Nomad in 2016. Since then I have never looked back.

What is a Digital Nomad?

According to Wikipedia:

"Digital nomads are individuals who leverage telecommunications technologies to perform their work duties, and conduct their lifestyle in a nomadic manner"

To summarise, a Digital Nomad is someone who is able to earn an income from anywhere in the world and uses this advantage to travel or live abroad.

Digital Nomads are individuals who have achieved something called ***location independence***.

How is this Possible?

One word - the internet.

Put simply, if you can earn an income by performing your work on a computer whilst communicating and sharing files through the internet, you can achieve location independence.

If you've ever read the book by Tim Ferriss entitled, 'The 4 Hour Work Week', you know what I'm talking about. Since 2007, this book has inspired thousands to *eliminate* their barriers to freedom and set up online income streams.

Since 2007 however, the world of technology has continued to change rapidly and now, it is no longer necessary to build an online business in order to be location independent. Instead, you

can take your regular skills (or maybe learn some new ones) and find people that are willing to pay you without you coming into any particular office or specific location.

Easy examples of professions which are suited to earning income remotely include:

- Software Development
- Web Design
- Writing
- Marketing Consulting, and
- Graphic Design

How I Achieved Location Independence

My story is an excellent example of someone who made a conscious decision to build a career of remote work and travel.

Before I committed to achieving a life of remote work and travel, I was just a university student studying a degree in Accounting. The trajectory of my career at that stage was a long and hard working life in the corporate world, starting with a low-paying job at a firm with no opportunity to travel.

I knew that a career in Accounting was not what I wanted so I did something radical. I decided to teach myself the skills that would allow me to achieve my goal of location independence in the shortest amount of time.

The career I chose was to be a Web Developer.

Long-story-short, I spent the next year learning how to code, building my brand and seeking work. In January 2016, I left Australia and started my own Digital Nomad journey.

4 Steps to Location Independence

In order to make this guide easy to follow, I have broken down my suggested process for becoming location independent into 4 simple steps, which are:

1. Determine how you will make income online
2. Find people to pay you (ie. finding clients or a remote job)
3. Eliminating barriers to freedom
4. Choosing your location(s)

Step 1: How will you Earn Income Online?

You can follow my example directly but honestly, there are many ways you could do it.

Learning code and becoming a web developer was a good choice for me for many reasons including:

- Previous experience in building simple websites and applications
- High demand of developers in my city
- Numerous resources to learn the craft (at no financial cost)
- Many opportunities for freelancing and remote work

For these reasons, becoming a web developer was a good choice for me but not necessarily for you.

My advice is that you choose your career based on your strengths and interests. If you hate programming but love writing non-fiction, by all means pursue a career in blog writing or copywriting.

At the end of the day, if you're location independent but hate your job, you're still going to be unhappy so it's better to choose work that you will enjoy as much as possible.

There's always the option to build a highly passive online business if your goal is to achieve location independence and relax most of time. If that's what you'd like to do, I have some recommendations for courses that [you can find here](#).

To be honest, I'm a naturally risk-averse person. I wasn't willing to spend thousands on courses and capital and so I chose the more reliable option of becoming a location-independent freelancer instead. That being said, as you build your brand online, you can always find opportunities to monetise your expertise. This is something I am focusing more on now that my brand is growing.

There is really no 'one path' to earning income online so make sure you take a look at your strengths and interests and start testing out a few things. During my journey to location independence, I didn't just experiment with Web Development but also SEO, Blog Writing and more.

Step 2: Finding Work

This step, for me at least, is by far the hardest.

Unless you are a highly connected person or great at sales, convincing clients or employers to hire you on a remote basis can be difficult.

If you have to, take up some ‘location dependent’ work first and use it to gain experience and possibly negotiate with your employer to keep you on remotely. You can find tips on how to do this in Step IV of the 4 Hour Work Week.

In my case, I had about 11 months on my lease until I could leave so I was happy to work in an office for the time being as long as the job was going to lead me closer to my goals. Having a set date in the future also allowed me to make a long-term plan and save up a bit of money.

That being said, if you want to be location independent right now, here’s what you can do:

1. Jump onto a freelance job platform like [UpWork](#) and start applying for jobs, or
2. Build a brand and promote your freelance business to attract clients

If you’re taking the freelance route, you can use either of these two methods. It’ll most likely be quicker to get started using option 1 but option 2 is definitely the better option in the long-term. Either is a huge topic that I won’t discuss here in detail but feel free to contact me for any advice through my website or on any of my social media accounts.

Once you are earning enough to pay your expenses in whatever town or city you are living in, you are now location independent!

The amount of income you need to be location independent varies, of course based on where you are living and that’s something we will discuss in step 4.

Step 3: Eliminating Barriers to Freedom

Again, this is something Tim Ferriss discusses in the 4 Hour Work Week and it can be incredibly simple or extraordinarily hard depending on how you’ve set up your life.

This process begins with identifying your barriers to freedom and making a plan to eliminate them.

Barriers to freedom include:

1. Financial Commitments (such as a mortgage, rental lease or any other recurring bill)
2. Family or relationship commitments
3. Too many possessions to store or maintain
4. Lack of willingness to go outside your comfort zone

Let’s discuss each one in a little more detail

Barrier 1: Financial Commitments

This can be one of the hardest barriers to break free from but it can be done.

If you have an expensive mortgage and are not willing or able to sell, your only solution may be to build up enough location independent income while you're still at home to be able to pay for it while you are away. If you chose this route, you can always rent your home out through AirBnB or more traditional methods.

If you have a rental lease, your best option may be to wait until the lease ends and plan your escape then. This is what my girlfriend, Denise and I did.

For everything else, you either need to come up with a plan to eliminate these liabilities or simply earn more income in order to cover them. I would definitely advise against the second option as if you're not able to benefit from the service you're leaving behind (such as a phone bill, in my case), you're just wasting money.

Barrier 2: Family or Relationships

There is a reason why conventional wisdom states that you should travel as much as possible before starting a family. I don't have any kids myself but it's obvious that when you start a family, it's generally a lot harder to travel.

If you have a family with kids however, don't automatically write off your chances. There's a few examples of Digital Nomad families including [these guys](#).

In terms of relationships, I've heard it can be tough. Again, I did not experience this barrier as my girlfriend was more than happy to go on this journey with me. However, it's something that holds back many people wanting to make the switch.

You may have to make a tough decision at the end of the day or arrange a compromise. You could always have a long-distance relationship or perhaps live a life halfway between a regular life and a life of a digital nomad.

Barrier 3: Too Many Possessions

The majority of the digital nomads out there practice some form of Minimalism (the concept of possessing only as much as you physically need).

If you have a strong attachment to your physical possessions such as a car or some awesome stereo system, you're willingness to travel will be inhibited. You can always be location

independent and not travel but if your goal is to be location independent, why not use it to your advantage and go travelling?

Even if you're happy to spend some time apart from your prized possessions, you will have to find some place to store them. The only other option to sell off what you don't plan to use in the near future and practice some form of minimalism. The second option is what I did and what I recommend to everyone.

Barrier 4: Unwillingness to go Outside your Comfort Zone

Again, if you don't plan on using your location independence to travel, you can ignore this section completely. Alternatively, if you plan to travel, you may experience uncomfortability.

This should be obvious to anyone who has travelled overseas and not stayed in luxury. Unfortunately, if you desire to travel does not outweigh your desire to be comfortable, you simply won't be motivated to travel.

If you're reading this however, I assume that you are the type of person that values new experiences and going outside your comfort zone. I certainly do and honestly, I think it's an awesome thing.

Step 4: Choosing your Location

This step is my favourite. Here's where you get to start shopping :)

Starting out, cost of living will likely be a major factor. For example, there is a HUGE difference in cost of living between certain cities in Southeast Asia or Eastern Europe and so-called world cities like Paris, New York, London and Sydney.

Let me just say that if you currently live in the western world (ie. countries like the US, Canada, Australia & the UK) you have an incredible opportunity to take advantage of the huge disproportion of wages to cost of living.

A major reason while Digital Nomads chose locations such as Chiang Mai in Northern Thailand or Bali in Indonesia is that they are able to earn in their home currency while spending in the local currency. The result of which is that they can live a much higher standard of living compared to earning the same money back home.

Of course, there are a bunch of other factors you will want to consider such as the availability of high speed internet as well as your own preferences.

A good website to view locations sorted by these criteria is [NomadList](#) however, you should take the rankings with a grain of salt. I use the website to gain ideas but I do not base my travel plans on just this website.

Much like browsing in a shopping mall, you might not be able to afford some of the destinations on your list but don't be discouraged. Make the best choice based on your budget and preferences and then work hard to afford those more expensive destinations (that's how I approached it over the 2 years I was travelling).

Trust me when I say that the most important thing is that you just take the first step. Choose whichever takes your fancy at first and learn as you go. The best thing about being a Digital Nomad is you never know where it'll take you.

And, if you want a few ideas on remote work friendly destinations that are both affordable and comfortable, check out my '[Digital Nomad Guide to the World](#)'

Now is the Time

Thank you so much for getting this far through my guide. If you have read up until this point, I'm confident you have the motivation to make your dream of location independence a reality.

My mission as Chris the Freelancer is to inspire and advise the next generation of Digital Nomads.

If you haven't already, check out my channel on [YouTube](#) to find interviews with successful nomads, more about my story and follow my journey as I travel the world.

I want to thank you again for taking the time to read this guide and if you have any questions, feel free to message me on any of my social media accounts or website.

Also, if you have any feedback on this guide please share it with me. One day, I hope to build this guide into a fully-fledged value-filled course or series that will cover everything in a lot more detail (unless someone else beats me to it 😊)

Until next time,
Chris