How to Start Working As a Freelance Web Designer Or Programmer

There are many ways to earn money as a freelancer on the Internet, particularly if you are able to write articles, content, design a web page, program web applications (think PHP / MySQL), do sound recording and engineering, know your way around the web, or are even willing to spend a couple hours a day doing quick data entry projects or link exchanges for a website. Often, there are even jobs you might be surprised to find. People looking for freelancers often pay through PayPal or other type services on the Internet. If you work fast, many of you can start finding little projects to start TODAY (no kidding, it works!) Here are some ways to find jobs like these on the internet and get started.

Step One: Go sign up at a Freelancer Marketplace. This is a place where people post ads for jobs and people bid on getting those projects. Signing up is almost always free (and if it isn't you'll need to look elsewhere), and there's usually nothing expected of you at these talent pools until you win a project (at which time they will take out a percentage commission of your final project bid -- usually anywhere from 5-10%). There are quite a few on the Internet; I'll be listing these resources following this article.

Step Two: You will usually have to confirm your email address, so do that first. Next, you'll be choosing a username and filling out your profile. Don't worry about it if you don't have much to add just yet, just choose a username and add the basics, for now. Later, you can update and add more when you can. Choose a username that sounds professional and trustworthy (think 'writer4hire' or 'projectmaster', rather than 'suckit2004')

Step Three: Setting up your profile. When you're setting up your profile, be sure to choose the categories of the kind of work you do (writing, marketing, web design, ASP, whatever) and choose to be updated when new projects arrive **instantly**. You want to do this for sure, other-wise some other guy could beat you to the job! Many times, being the first one to place a good bid will get you the job, so it's worth it! Being FAST is a great way to get started working immediately.

Step Four: The Bidding Wars. When you start finding projects you want to work on, being new (zero feedback), place bids that are a bit cheaper than you'd normally be willing to go. A few tiny projects and good feedback will get you the clout you'll need to start charging more for projects. Besides, an extra $40 in your Paypal account in a day or so (if your fast) is nothing to complain about!

Step Five: Know When and How to Follow Up. When you do put a bid in, make sure you also leave a message on the board and repeat exactly what you said in the bid. Most projects are awarded for a combination of things, but mainly because the person understands what they have to do! Write a proposal that is basically a SHORT recap that includes the time it will take you, how you'll be delivering the final product (such as 'A ZIP file in an email with a TXT file of the article', etc.), and - believe it or not - a summary of EXACTLY WHAT THEY ASKED FOR IN THE PROJECT POST. I know it sounds silly, but it does get the point across, and you'll get chosen because you sound like you understand. And you do - because you have to read the post to even DO this!

Step Six: Winning the Project. When you get the project, do it AS FAST AS YOU CAN! Speed is important if you're working for less than what you expect at first. PLUS it will gain you better feedback.

Step Seven: Rinse, and repeat. After about 5-10 projects, you'll realize quickly that you're actually pretty much working for yourself these days. And considering the size of many of these sites, you can do this on and on and on...whenever you want.

Now, as promised, here are links to resources to actually get working:

TheSuperlancers (http://www.thesuperlancers.com) :: This is a new and very promising site. It's run by both ex-freelancers and current website developers, so they really know both sides of the game. It's a flat $5 commission here for any project. And aside from great features like payment escrow, they really seem to want to provide a lot of support and help where needed. Every time I've had to deal with service and support on this site I had a response within an hour ... and it was actually *helpful*. They also have some of the cheapest and best rates in the business. Their talent pool is big enough to get the work done and have a decent selection of bidders for your project, but they are the newest site (probably less than a year old).

ScriptLance **(http://www.scriptlance.com) ::** This is probably the opposite of the site above. This site was founded several years ago, and while it isn't the oldest, it certainly has the most reputation, good and bad. These guys have some good things going for them, though, including a huge talent pool. You can always guarantee some results by posting a project there. Bidding on a project at this site is free, too, but you are charged a commission when you close a project (usually 5-10% of your final accepted project bid). The support here is generally slow and not always useful, as it is with most older sites, but it's always great to have options. I usually go here when I don't get the results I want at the first place (which is free for me, the client/buyer).

GetAFreelancer / (Now Freelancer) (http://www.freelancer.com):: The middle-brother of these two other sites. GAF (as it is dubbed) has been in business for several years, and has grown quite a bit recently. Often, I will end up here if I can't find what I want at the other two.

Usually, it's rarely necessary to go beyond the first site in my recent experience -- but it's always good to have options, isn't it?

It's that easy. If any questions, just talk to support at both places, they're both good at getting back to people. Have fun, and hope to see you out there!