

Leading your idea in print down its most profitable path...

So you've got an **article** or **book idea** that you want to turn into both **big money** and widely-seen **expertise presence**. That's the way to think! I'd also add that the copy needn't be completely rewritten again and again, so also think **reprint, rewrite, reprint of rewrites, and more...**

Let's say you want to write about the 2016 Chicago Cubs and their playing in the coming National League baseball playoffs—and perhaps for the pennant, of all things! But, if you can't tell, or wouldn't want to tell, a baseball from a ball of wax, your idea and copy to sell again and again could be about the Trump-Clinton presidential election, kumquat delicacies from the kitchen, or driverless autos driving nonetheless on the streets!

Alas, I've been a baseball fan from/in Chicago almost since the Great Fire and the hapless Cubs haven't won a pennant for 107 years. You know us by the fetching blue, red, and white "C" hats that we have had to hide in our cupboard for generations. Alas, this is our year, so we dusted them off and wear them on our heads for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and almost all the hours between—until October when we will know if the hex of the billy goat is true. **So I'm picking the Cubs for this empire-building article writ long...** (But if you're reading this in the Philippines, on the Pyrenes, or in Peru, kumquat delicacies might be easier to understand...)

Let's start with an **article** about the "plight of the Cubs" (or any fetching topic) for an American magazine. You do the usual

things: some basic research to find the most interesting angles or slants, pick the best approach, and subject that idea to a two-pronged **feasibility study**—is it feasible to write and is it feasible to sell? (Go to the search box in the upper top right corner and type in **feasibility study** to see how the magazine approach works. The blog copy comes from either [How to Sell 75% of Your Freelance Writing](#) or [The Travel Writer's Guide](#). To read those books, used and sold for a pittance, check the [Amazon catalog](#).) The feasibility study tells how to test magazines vs newspapers, who are the most likely readers, the querying process, and (for magazines), should you get a “go-ahead,” how you best present the copy for sale. (If it fits newspaper freelance buying fields too, submit the written article in final form, without a query and sent in ready-to-go fashion.) If the idea is a “go” as feasible to write and sell, send your articles to the best markets in both categories.

If the **magazine** buys your submission, you can use much of the article's contents again (at least slightly rewritten) two ways: as a **reprint** or a **rewrite**. Then if a rewrite is bought, you can send that off to a still-virgin magazine as a reprint. With cunning, you can have several of each of these three partially-completed masterpieces filled in (completed) and in print, all paying you! (Again, go to the Search box above and write in reprints or rewrites to see step-by-step blogs with more details.)

With **newspapers**, there are two paths: (1) you can literally sell the first copy to as many newspapers as will buy it as long as they aren't “national” newspapers (like the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, or the *Wall Street Journal*—sell them one at a time, and, after it is sold, thoroughly rewrite the piece before selling it to another “national”) and (2) don't simultaneously sell it two or more regional newspapers within 100 miles of each other (“distribution ranges”). Otherwise, you can sell the very same newspaper article(s) to any other

newspaper (except the “nationals”) as long as they don’t overlap. Just tell the newspaper editor yours is a simultaneous submission and you are selling it outside of their 100-mile circulation orb.

What more can you do with reams of unused copy parts shouting to be read? Throw all the used copy into a cauldron, add the unused gems, mix them up again, and “**topic spoke**” them to find as many of the other potential eager buyers as will shriek and pay, delightfully, to use your genius and make you rich. Check the blog search for items about “topic spoking” in the 400+ blogs waiting to be used!

How many **books** can you pluck from that cauldron (adding in other sources still untouched)? You could write/publish a book for all kinds of Cubs’ *aficionados*: one for kids/young adults, one for the regular folk, another for seniors (some praying for the Cubs to win, others incredulous that they are anywhere near the top), another for the Cubs fans focusing on this year and the past two, another putting all 107 years in perspective, and so on.

And because each book requires a mound of research, interviews, anecdotes, photos, and more, you can turn this into new wealth of found and reworked copy and pluck out more **articles**, and thus more **rewrites**, **reprints**, and **reprints of rewrites**. You can also sell related **photos** where you sell copy (check photos in Search), often the same photo repeatedly since they are almost always sold on one-time rights.

Lost in this pile of print are the **directly related spin-offs**, like **audiobooks** of any or all of those books just mentioned; **focus books** about specific elements of baseball for the truly absorbed, of the past year or two or of all time, like the pitching, the records set and broken, ERAs, a projection of future years and records of new(er) players emerging in the 2016 excitement; even **videos** and **movies**, all being in print before being converted to other media. Then using the most

visible of the platform builders, authors speaking about their (new) specialty from the platform: see **rallies, speeches, how-to workshops, seminars, talks**, and so on...

Every time your champion copy has your by-line attached to your super writing in a newspaper, magazine, or book, you are solidifying yourself as an **expert** in that field, building a following, and making yourself more wanted by **information and product producers**. They want to get more good items from you, a recognized “valuable and prolific source” of, in this case, baseball, Cubs, and sports ideas, information, and articulation.

The point here is that **almost any word or idea has lots of legs (and ears) and can be multiplied very profitably many times by many means**. The trick is to create interesting copy about ideas that others want to know more about that is spelled properly and has the facts, quotes, and anecdotes artfully blended into more good ideas. Most exceptional writers don't stray too far from what others want to know, and they churn a fair amount of interesting text into many articles, then books, rather than just making one sale or two before wandering off to find unrelated subjects for articles that are also sold a few times. **It's wiser and fills your coffers faster by turning your related ideas and copy over and over.**

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

[More how-to writing, publishing, and speaking stuff
at www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm.]

A very new format for a seminar workbook...

In a now very long past—decades—I must have literally copied and carted 40,000 seminar workbooks (sometimes a half mile, too often up stairs). Most of those workbooks were 12-20 pages long! Too late to complain: that was the way it was done. But yesterday technology finally removed my shackles—and perhaps my blinders!

Some fact-setting now, then a detailed explanation copy of the new format that you may be interested in modifying and using. Explaining the 40,000: I have given more than 2,000 four-hour seminars, most as college/university extended ed offerings, almost all in California. They rarely had less than 20 participants, which meant 24 or so workbooks in case last minute registrants were waiting at the door. Ugh.

But yesterday a different request opened my eyes. I spoke to the **NSNC** (National Society of Newspaper Columnists) in L.A. about "[Publishing for Profit](#)" and, even though I myself had been a columnist several times, I had no way of knowing what other writing experiences the veteran audience had nor which of the dozen or so suggestions I would offer and expand upon they might wish to pursue.

Nor did I want to schlep any workbooks nor published books to sell BOR. (The airlines made that impossible anyway by charging for baggage—and rubbing in more salt by starving me en route!) But I did slip a copy of eight different books into my suitcase to display on a side table so they could see that they actually existed!

I know, I could have run copies off of the workbooks once I reached L.A. But I'm doubly convinced now, the day after, that the new format is many times better and smarter for the

future, it gives the audience more options, and it reduces or eliminates the burdensome task of hauling products for sale. That's why I'm sharing it now, while the fire burns, in case it would help you too. (If you have already discovered this "new" workbook process, congratulations! I'm sure you double agree! Why didn't you tell me?)

The rationale: I knew that all of my attendees were writers, they used computers daily, understood how to find websites, blogs, and could figure out the free-book code. Therefore all I had to do was explain the media or means needed, where the items could be found, the links or addresses for each, and what the resource references referred to. I gave them the instructions needed in the first two paragraphs, where the program was going in the next two, and the broadest of explanations of what the four sections to be covered in the text that followed.

That took a minute or two to re-explain at the beginning of the presentation, but then I could focus on the most important ways columnists might earn more and live happier. When appropriate, I could direct them to one or several of the references and, in some cases, tell them the best subtitles to the critical step-by-step details. There must be 600+ printed pages in the three free books and 200+ in the other items. Thus, by knowing where the information is at hand, almost immediately, they can pick, select, or reject it as they wish—or go back later, if they change their minds.

The workbook: The two-sided page *is* the workbook. In this case the program was designed to show U.S. columnists how else they can share, market, and expand their written gems (now or later) into other lucrative venues or ventures. That is what I talked about. If they need the application guidance, the resources would then send them to the "how-to" support material.

Enough explanation. What follows is the "workbook" they

received.

Workbook as delivered to the NSNC presentation:

Welcome!

I'm Gordon Burgett. It's 2016, we're all experienced writers, and the airlines won't let me schlep boxes of handouts as baggage anymore, so I'm going to use the Internet to let you pick what specific information you think will be useful to you later. At that point, you can download what you want or need, if anything. The most important material is free, there's no shipping or tax, and it'll be in your hands almost immediately!

Thus you have no workbook or piles of paper to lumber through. Just sit back for the first hour and let me explain a sort of strategy and ways that should help you considerably increase your writing income, then I'll answer any questions you have during the remaining 15 minutes. If you have more questions later, please email me at glburgett@aol.com.

My task is to help you fill your coin bags and increase your second-life options by doing more of what you already do very well—and make even more money (heavens!) by doing it.

I think the more-mullah quest starts with you strategizing at whatever point you are along your moneymaking-by-writing trail. I'll address that.

The rest of our oral trek today roughly follows the other four sections on these pages. I've posted lots of backup resources here that you can download if/when you want or need them. The most important material is free—three full core books, three helper reports, four website articles, and 400+ blogs to pluck from. To download most of that information, use our order page

at www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm

Here's how to download or see the resources: (1) find and separately order each **free book** on the order form—but *before* you submit each order write the coupon number [] in the coupon code box on that order form. Then submit the form, the price will drop to zero, and follow the download instructions that follow! (The freebies expire on 8/20/16.) Other items, unless noted, are from the order form and can be ordered separately or together at any time. They are also available from Amazon but if you want the three books free you must follow the instruction in (1). How to get the three **free reports** is explained below. See blog.gordonburgett.com for the blogs listed. Once there, find the SEARCH box, upper right corner under the Twitter logo. In that box enter either the topic you want to see more about (like query letters or niche) or the word I will give you. The **website articles** are from the direct website link location.

(I) **WRITING—[Travel Writer's Guide](#)** (free ebook)

Explains how to sell 75%+ of your freelance writing (mostly newspaper and magazine articles), how to triple your income by topic-spoking, how to earn more with sidebars, and how to organize profit-packed copy-, quote-, and anecdote-gathering trips...

Related resources:

“4 Proven Ways to Sell 75% of Your Freelance Writing” Go to **blog**, enter 4 proven ways

“How to Sell 75% of Your Travel Writing” (2 cassette program), \$20 + shipping

“25 Professional Query and Cover Letters” (ebook), \$4.99

“Reprints, Rewrites, Reprints of Rewrites, and Resales” (ebook), \$4.99

“The magic of topic spoking.” Go to **blog**, enter topic spoking

(II) **PUBLISHING–Niche Publishing: Publish Profitably Every Time** (free ebook)

A huge percentage of the risk-free, market-guaranteed book money is found here. We made \$2 million from dentists and are now following the same path from K-12 school administrators, supers, principals, and school boards. That process and business plan is explained in this book. If you write and publish, almost all the niche profits are yours. If you find experts in the field, you direct/edit, they write, and you publish, most of the profits are still yours but the fame is theirs.

Related resources:

“12-Step Pre-Test for Niche Publications” (ebook), \$4.99

“How to Test Your Niche Book before Writing or Publishing” (ebook), \$9.99

“How to Get Niche Articles in Print 75% of the Time” (ebook), \$2.99

(III) **PUBLISHING–How to Get Your Book Published in Minutes and Marketed Worldwide in Days** (free ebook). If you’re not niching, use the “open press” revolution plus Create Space/Kindle [Amazon] and Lightning Source as your first or major paths to building your own empire. Publish here, then (perhaps) try the major publishers.

Related resources:

“Open Book Publishing: Almost a Miracle! (ebook), \$3.10

“When Would I Always (or Never) Self-Publish My Book?” Go to **blog**, enter self-publish

“12 More Ways to Turn Your Book into Many More...” Go to **blog**, enter more ways

“Focus books and Selling a Book by its Parts” Go to the **blog**, enter focus

“Sample Focus Book: Rights and Responsibilities of School Principals” (ebook), \$3.99

“Sample Focus Book: How to Create the Best Staff Possible” (ebook), \$3.99

(IV) BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER—Empire Building (O.P., no replacement book yet.) Ultimately, for big money, expand the perception of your expertise through related information dissemination means, like speaking, seminarizing, giving workshops or retreats, audiobooks, classes, consulting, social media venues, radio-TV, guest performances, and so on. Or create/sell little empires along the way. Or align your writing, researching, interviewing, and publishing skills with others’ empires. Or do it all.

Related resources:

“How to Set Up and Market Your Own Seminar” (4-cassette seminar), \$40+shipping

“Six Special Tools That Get Speakers Booked First” (ebook), \$9.99

MORE FREE REPORTS:
*Lifelong Wealth by Being
Indispensable*
*Finding Indispensable Article
Topics*
101 Niche Marketing Topics

Just subscribe to my newsletter (seldom sent) at <http://www.gordonburgett.com/free-reports> and all three reports are immediately downloaded. Nobody else ever sees your address. Then if you want to escape my elist, just email me to be removed. I'm not offended—I forget names instantaneously.

That's it. If it helps, go to it.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

[Writers: how to find more people to interview...](#)

Sometimes you're writing an article or story and try as you may you can't think of or find another person to interview, other than your kids or some shlunk on the street corner. So what do you do?

Let's start with an expectation that few new writers know about or think they might be able to tiptoe around: that **almost every paying editor expects you to interview at least several (think three or four) people for your article**—and what the interviewee is asked or says is directly related to what the article is about.

After I say that in my seminar about interviewing a rather bizarre question usually pops up: **"Must the interviewee be living?"** I imagine they are really asking if they can use quotes from someone who has passed or, perhaps, can they include interviews with aliens or ghosts or the like? In the

second case, no. But quotes from the defunct, yes. Still, the quotes must come from a source that did once live—and the words must have been “captured intact” at that time, preserved, and passed down. Also, they can’t be “helped” to directly pertain to the subject at hand.

An example where this worked. I sold several articles about Dom Pedro II and his visit to the U.S. to open the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. All of the quotes came from a detailed diary that the King of Brazil kept during the visit that was published a few years after his death. I sent the editor a copy of the relevant phrases from the diary that I had translated from Portuguese. No problem.

Thus historical comments from the living or dead might provide background information and, sometimes, direct quotes that apply as said.

The best way not to get caught without interviewees is to read many other articles or accounts about the topic and note all vital information you can about their speakers or authors. The challenge is finding those publications. Your librarian will show you the “trace” books, if needed. “Google” will too, as will the company or college they work for.

Another way, if the topic is being actively discussed in the media, is to find all of the related interplay in print: who is taking part, their position, the group or association they represent, anything else that gives a clue. And if you only have one side of the topic, ask the speaker defending that viewpoint the names of the three most frequent (or best) speakers on each side of the issue—plus for phone or mail contacts.

Or delve more deeply into the topic. Specifically: a cure for Parkinson’s disease, how to get ahead (and stay ahead) of road deterioration, one-world currency, age-based income equity? Focus as much on the best brains and problem-solvers in each

field. Mine their expertise. Ask who you should contact to get a solid exchange.

Said another way, **ask the best informed expert(s) on the topic** if they could (or would) identify the top minds in their field, the top three or so best informed people who would identify the most important questions that must be asked, then offer their thoughts about possible answers or solutions to each. Sometimes that works. Sometimes they laugh uncontrollably, step back, and stare at you like you've just overdosed on your own brew!

Another way is to simply ask the chosen person after you finish interviewing them, "Would you point me to another expert as well informed as you that I can interview so my editor will have two points of view for his/her pages?"

Or just ask the shlunk on the street corner and take your chances. I did just that in a piece about the huge Schloss in Heidelberg. Seems there was a giant crack in a wall large enough to march an army through. So I asked a fellow just standing next to me if he knew anything about that crack and why the wall didn't just collapse or slide down? He smiled, then gave me an eloquent, point-by-point response! When finished, I applauded his knowledge (and clarity of expression). He smiled even more, then told me that he was a professor of architecture at the University of Heidelberg!

If in this somewhat rambling blog there is guidance that helps you, great.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. You can't just interview yourself, sadly. Such wit and erudite articulation untouchable! But if you have solid quotable comments in an article, book, or publication about the topic, you can say something like: "...in my 2016 book about

... I mentioned that ..." A bit awkward, alas, but better than just saying, "Somebody once said ..."

I will be writing a book about interviewing soon. If that interests you, please stay tuned.

Selling one article topic to 5-8 different publications!

"Could you sell the same text, unchanged, to both magazines and newspapers?" is the most often asked question at my writing seminars!

I suppose you could, but I wouldn't because I wouldn't know how to unravel the rights issues. Anyway, it'd be far more profitable with a lot less work just planning five to eight sales from the same fact (and photo) pool.

Here's how I might sell one topic (in this case, the Chicago River on St. Patrick's Day) **as widely as possible for the most yield and the least amount of additional research, composition, and jpg taking?**

1. I'd first query the idea to the **highest paying magazines** (in order, one at a time). Then I'd write my lead article for the first editor giving me a "go-ahead." This article might focus on a St. Patrick's Day special, a big deal in the Windy City because at 9 a.m. that morning the Chicago River turns orange for a few minutes until (it's said) the leprechauns switch it to green so lush it puts tears in every O'Brien eye—and stupefies much of the rest of midland America as it

flows in reverse to the Illinois River and the Mississippi to and past New Orleans! Some 400,000 visitors a year line the downtown Chicago bridges, then watch the St. Patrick's Day Parade march through the city that day at noon, rain or shine.

2. After that magazine article (sold first rights) appears in print, **I could sell it exactly as is to any other magazine as a reprint.** (If you sold the photos first rights too—or for one-time use—you could also sell them to the same [or other] reprint buyers!)

3. But since I've got a box full of facts and quotes, why not query, then write another main article about a similar happening that takes place the same weekend: the Flower and Garden Show at Navy Pier (nearby, on the same verdant river as it reaches Lake Michigan)? This is **a loose example of a rewrite** since you can slip in the key points about the concurrent St. Patrick's Day festivities. All you have to do is rewrite that used text, which you'd have to do anyway because it must be in a different layout for both publications. Or you could call this rewrite "Chicago's Greatest Gift: the St. Patrick's Day Parade and the Flower and Garden Show Side by Side!" (What a title!) Since this magazine piece is a first-rights sale, **why not sell this distinct offering to other magazines seeking reprints?**

4. **We've still not sold to the newspapers!** I would significantly rewrite either of the magazine articles (or mix and match) in newspaper fashion, give the result a different title, and maybe try for a national newspaper sale first. Since this is a major set-date activity (like Christmas or Easter), most major newspapers look for event-related special articles. So I would query here several months earlier so it can get scheduled, then work out the special submission process with the travel editor.

5. Or if the national newspapers aren't enchanted by the Chicago Journeyman Plumbers' river magic, I'd **send it**

simultaneously to all of the Midwest newspapers 100 miles away from each other to see if I can spin the special event one last time (this year), before the emerald is long gone.

6. And, of course, **I'd handle the photos myself so I could sell them as widely as possible** without messing up their rights!

By March 1, 2016 I will release **a brand new book** about this topic where each of the **resale means to magazines and newspapers** are explained in detail. Those are simultaneous submissions, reprints, rewrites, reprints of rewrites, rewrites of reprints, modified reprints, sidebars, overseas sales, and shorts. Check Amazon Books under Gordon Burgett for the still-undecided title and release date—or email glburgett@aol.com for specifics and cost.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

Stretch one skinny article into five with minimal effort

How would you like to design one article to appear in five different magazines or newsletters that explains the benefits, through example, of **your firm's specialization** and why they may want to know more about your services? The best thing: it's pretty much the same article with a similar message, and the five articles will probably take far less than 40% of the time and effort!

Let's say you consult in the first-contact field, to help

improve relations and create more business follow-through between receptionists and front-desk employees in small to medium-sized businesses. You can outwit your competitors by using the same basic idea five times through a popular **reprint and rewrite concept** familiar to journalists.

Perhaps your consulting would work well for offices that deal in insurance, real estate, loan processing, titles, and interior designing. What you must do is **create a master article** that will work well in publications to each of those five fields. Let's say the creation of a telephone answering approach and basic script that would make all who phone (1) feel welcome and reassured by the professional message content and tone, (2) would be promptly directed to the person best prepared to answer their question or give advice, (3) or would be sent to the department or desk that handles their needs, and (4) would experience the properly directed pass-off smoothly and courteously.

That master article (probably about 650-900 words long) would give an example of how the greeting program you would design would function, with now-and-then examples and benefits clearly visible. But it would be niche-tailored to meet the needs in the five fields just mentioned. To do that you might **interview a first-contact person** or two in firms in each field, so the article has the right tone and vocabulary, and meets the unique needs in the different niches.

For example, you might call the office manager in, say, a loan office nearby and tell that person that you are ___ and you are writing an article about greeting solutions in the loan field and could you interview her/him for 15 minutes in person or by phone to have a better understanding of how greeting is handled in the loan office field. **It's surprising how eager others are to be interviewed.** You could do the same to the other four fields too. What you need for all or most of the niche articles is inside, hands-on, how-to information from an experienced practitioner.

Later, you might call the same person again, thank them once more, and ask if they could suggest the three niche magazines in their field they think might be interested in sharing the short article—that you will handle the placement but thought it prudent to see what is most read right now.

Since you already know how positive greeting programs can be designed, you can then take the problems mentioned in the interview and design a program that would **provide significant benefit**. (And do the same in the other fields too. The second article will be much faster; the fifth, about as fast as you can type.)

Then you use the usual submission procedures to the target magazines, in this case a **query letter** suggesting the article or a **direct submission** of the finished article with a cover letter. When accepted and submitted remember to include a “**bio slug**,” a 20-35-word short that tells about you, the author, or the firm, plus the address/phones/email info so the readers can contact you for business!

Why would you do this? To make local contacts through the interviewees, get your firm’s beneficial suggestions in front of readers nationwide in five different fields, and to have copies of in-print articles to use for your p.r. or direct promotions. **What I like best is doing five while you do one.** As long as you are thinking this way, why not think a bit deeper and get a much better return?

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. To see other blogs about **reprints, rewrites, query letters**, and **selling freelance writing**, just type those words in the **search box**, upper right, and the other blogs will appear after this article.

Some thoughts about interviewing...

*This is an excerpt (part of a chapter) from my coming book, **Interviewing**. I talk about tools and means used to interview:*

Interviewing is mostly you asking questions to a person or, rarely, a group, and receiving an intelligible response in return. When you record what you asked and what they replied, that is the thinnest skeleton of a completed interview.

That's a bit simplistic but most of the rest just adds bulk and hope to the process.

A huge percentage of my interviews have involved direct communication with my target person. **More than half were done eye to eye (really mouth to ear)**, and most of those were done when I was learning how, usually on the road last century gathering travel material. I asked and they responded, and I translated and wrote what they said into a notepad, in a kind of shorthand that spontaneously evolved (nouns mostly, other key words underlined.) It was give and take, staccato fashion, one question/a reply, segues... My goal was about five minutes, which was a long time for them and for me. It rarely lasted 30 minutes; an hour interview never happened.

Well, that sense of brevity may be somewhat misleading because many "interviews" became conversations, and ended when it was comfortable or necessary to do so. If the other person wanted to keep talking I was usually game to do so (unless I absolutely had to be somewhere else right then—sometimes we resumed the exchange later over lunch or coffee.) Other times they just wanted someone to talk to, or were lonely, or were proud of what they had done or seen and wanted to share more

of it. That was fine. Often it gave me more, better information and a deeper interview.

Occasionally I was drawn to an interviewee. I wanted to know them better, and (hard to believe) that seemed mutual. They were interesting, often passionate about some cause, and they almost always bubbled or bristled with humor. What they said was worth sharing; it was fun; they were worth knowing. A few of those contacts became lifelong friends, particularly those still living.

But mostly interviewing is fast and focused. It's kind of a dancing duel: you extracting what you need (and hoping for more); them telling you what they want you (and your readers) to hear, hoping they didn't say too much.

In my mind, first interviews should be courteous, painless, and fairly fast, leaving open the possibility of a later follow-up. But I don't mention that before or during the first interview other than asking them how I might later contact them should I run into a fact or a phrase that needs clarification and asking for or verifying an address where I would send them a copy of the printed article. (If you offer, do send it.)

Most of my interviews not done eye-to-eye were done by **telephone**. Those weren't as satisfactory because you couldn't tell how much of what they were saying was true, a greased lie, or something in between. Nor did you ever know if the voice you were hearing belonged to the actual person you had called. (I don't think I ever interviewed a stiff or a stand-in, but surprisingly often they grilled me to make sure I was the journalist they were supposed to be talking to and that I was writing an article for such-and-such a publication. Everyday people took me at face (or voice) value, happy to be the one being interviewed. The higher ups were more likely to have their assistant or caretaker vet or check me out first).

Another telephone problem: the tenuous connection between you and the person you are interviewing—one wire—almost invites the other person to simply hang up or disconnect when they have said what they think you should (or need to) hear. It's a true test of your interviewing (and inventive) magnetism to be able to keep the other person focused and actively responding. Some of that is created before starting the actual interview by getting the respondent's buy-in to the importance of the exchange so what they say can reach their target listeners' or readers' ears.

My restraint to interviewing by phone was personal—and, in my dotage, still is. I grew up weaving waggish humor and pun-riddled, antic wordplay into my everyday conversation. It drove my few friends crazy. But all of that tomfoolery had to be excised when phone interviewing strangers for print, particularly when they envisioned sparks or bolts of radiated global fame emanating from the article (or even book) they would be in. It was their big moment and they didn't expect mirth or frivolity—any humor at all—then, particularly over the telephone where smiles are never seen and barely heard. So half of what I normally might have said, or how I might have said it, was verboten and probably dumbfounding. However funny, they never, ever would have laughed. They were expecting to be asked to share gems of wisdom, poignant observation, Christian guidance, and household tips. Out the telephonic window flew my witty high jinks, which left the interviewer, me (or you), nearly speechless, jocularly disarmed.

Alas, nothing is incurable when regular eating is at steak. I immediately reverted to my telephone high school date-getting scheme of imploring (or interviewing) by script. My first 100 or so interviews (it may have been 500) were very, very tightly structured, almost every word written or typed. It looked something like this, although where you see ideas below I had complete sentences, short sentences to give them time to

respond:

- * wee introduction
- * reminder of why I was calling and where their words would be shown to the world
- * a question
- * a second question—these were the most important answers in case something else interrupted the call—it happens often—and there would be no chance to finish... [more on this later]
- * [if something relevant in their reply to my questions was said or hinted at I would ask more, prodding queries about it, to provoke more facts or brilliance]
- * a third question
- * [if they verbally wandered off and what they said would also interest my imaginary readers I let them wander. I only reherded them back into my imaginary readers' corral of interest when they wore out or I still had a final question to ask]
- * fourth question (or more) if needed. See above.
- * anything else, Mr./Ms. _____, that I should have asked but didn't?"
- * "is there a phone number I could use to reach you if I find something I need to verify later?"
- * "I'll gladly send you a copy of the printed article as soon as it appears—remember, printing can sometimes take months"
- * "is _____ the address where I should send the article, in your name?"
- * "thank you again, Mr./Mrs. _____, for the information and your time"
- * "it sounds like a very interesting article. I appreciate your kindness and your sharing"
- * (hang up softly, breathe deeply, wipe brow, hydrate rewardingly, and type out the whole interview then or before nightly repose)

Interviewing by **email**, or even by **social media**, is fast, sometimes too public too soon, and a whole lot less expansive.

Combined with **Skype** or other computer-to-computer linking, it's fairly easy and much faster to talk with others now—if they agree to talk with you.

For example, ...

This is an unedited extraction of part of **an early chapter of a book called INTERVIEWING**. Check future blogs for more copy about the topic.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

[Author of Self-Publishing Manual, Dan Poynter, has died...](#)

The author of the best-selling **Self-Publishing Manual**, Dan Poynter, has died. We were “in the trenches” writing friends and I already miss him, in part because it was Dan’s turn to buy lunch. So will thousands more whose lives he touched and changed. He had been quite ill for a while, seemed to be improving, but, instead, Dan passed away a few days back.

Poynter wrote almost 100 books but he was best known for his **Self-Publishing Manual**, now in its 14th edition. Many of us exploring the hinterlands of “doing-it-ourselves” publishing, with our starter books (rarely sought, even more rarely bought), pounding away on clunky typewriters and wading in rubber cement, wandering through the last days of the past

century, when up popped his how-to gift. The **SPM** was a light from heaven. It answered questions we didn't even know we should ask. As Dan learned more, the book kept getting better and bigger. In short order his grateful fans, hat in hand, too often bruised by the titans from Gotham and other bookstore bulk buyers, turned his manual into a huge seller...

Dan was a close friend of mine for lots of decades. We're a few weeks apart in age (he would never admit it), I lived about 20 miles away, and we seemed to wander into the same ersatz gatherings and adventures, befriending many of the same odd people, and we quietly joined the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA)—Dan helped birth it—and the National Speakers Association (NSA).

He was a tall, quiet fellow who gave freely of his knowledge. Many know that he was President of the Parachutists Assn as well. He joked that he married the thrill of descent (he was a life-long bachelor), and was faithful to the end.

In fact, rather than using his law training Dan set up and ran a loft in Oakland. His publishing career (and life) started when he couldn't find a book about parachute knotting that his clientele needed, to get licensed. "I knew as much about publishing as some poor soul tapping rubber trees for a living," he told me. So he contacted every company however involved with knotting and made copies of the diagrams and instructions they sent back, pulled them into a \$40 three-ring instruction manual, wrote the conjunctive copy, then bought a dandy house near Goleta (Santa Barbara) from the profits. It overlooked the Pacific Ocean east of the UC Santa Barbara. From his front porch you could see the only American mainland target attacked by the Axis in World War II, an oil tank sighted by the misdirected Japanese Navy.

I first met him at a free lunch where Xerox was showing their brand new copiers to a bevy of hungry writers (becoming publishers). We passed on the street a couple of times but we

didn't really meet again until he tried to kill himself (inadvertently, he claims) by falling 100+ feet straight down and almost impaling himself on a volleyball net pole on East Beach. He had written (or was writing) a book about Parasailing (or was it Paragliding? He also wrote a pile of other weird books). There was a slack in the tow rope and he found himself stalled in midair! Alas, the pause was miraculously timed—a gaggle of bone doctors taking a break from a convention happened to be playing volleyball when he dropped in on them! He was nearly killed. A few days later, in the weakest voice hearable, he called and asked if I'd take his newest book to the ABA in Los Angeles the next week. I did (when I found out what the ABA was), and that started a long string of lunches, Gold Coast meetings (a sort-of branch of NSA), and so on...

Dan had a sense of humor, much of it hoarded internally. He didn't have time (or much patience) for editing would-be books sent for his help by adoring fans. He threatened to farm them all off to me, and rarely he couldn't help himself: I would get a DOA bundle (with a spine) in the mail with a note daring me to make sense and save the soul of the hapless scribe of the offending manuscript. The note usually mentioned that I was the only person who could get the author in print since the bundle was so much like my own books!

A final story. Dan gave weekend gatherings for book creators at his palace. The couple of times I spoke there he would hold up one of my early books and tell the attendees that it was certainly not how to design your own cover—and that he had bought a couple of copies of the book so he wouldn't run out of such a pitiful display. I told him I was hunting for some hole in one of his books, the table of contents lost in the index, upside-down chapters, or something equally egregious for revenge. But I never found anything out of place—and now he's left before me and the fun is gone.

Dan Poynter was a smart fellow and already is a much missed

friend.

Gordon Burgett

Where might your bio and sales info do you the most good?

If you are digitally displaying your achievements and the products/skills that you have for sale, where might that be shown to your best advantage? Even if it's only done to delight your kids, prove your prowess to your spouse, or put some strut in your aging parents' prance, where might they most likely (and logically) see it?

Maybe at your **website**, where you can hide almost anything in its most exquisite, self-defined detail?

Or, in miniature, in your **social media profiles**?

Yesterday I became convinced that at least for writers, speakers, and publishers maybe the best shout sheet would be at our **Author Central page at Amazon.com**.

I concluded that from a dandy multi-segment workshop given by three BAIPA leaders at the monthly (second Saturday) gathering in Novato, California. (BAIPA is the San Francisco Bay Area Independent Publishers Association.) According to David Cutler, Judy Baker, and Ruth Schwartz, we would be woefully derelict if we left anything unrevealed at that site.

Why would Amazon be the prize listing site for our bios and the related exposition of products, services, and current or

coming activities? Because far more buyers go to or through Amazon to buy paperbacks, ebooks, and audiobooks (plus batteries, kettles, and harmonicas, etc.) than anywhere else. And more eyes usually mean more buys of our printed or spoken gems! (You don't publish through Amazon? You can list all other products there too.)

What can you include there to prove to the hungry public that you know your stuff and that your knowledge is immediately (and wisely) purchasable? Your books (bound or digital), audiobooks, articles, blogs as they appear, a long introduction, photos, videos, events (present and future), plus more...

How can others review and use this well presented repository? You can link them [there](#), put a widget at your website, or they can just put your name up at Amazon.com and your Author Central info will appear—if you create it, which is fast and free.

I know, others have to go through Amazon to reach it. That bothers me too. But I will simply explain to them that it is where they can find the best and most recent list of my publications and services—and give the link or widget.

That's it. I felt a bit stupid being all but unaware that Author Central existed despite the fact that Kindle and Create Space sell lots of my books (as do several other publishers, and us too). But I will use it often now. I'm interested having them hawking the existence of my words, wit, and (rumored) wisdom 24 hours a day, though I hope they keep that display some distance from the kettles and harmonicas.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. There's an obvious exception to the Amazon answer to this blog's query: if you are a **niche-oriented publisher or**

speaker, the best location would be in niche-related places. You are unlikely to be selling through Amazon.com. Two very unlike business models! (See my blogs about niche publishing if this is unclear. Just write niche publishing in the “search” box in the upper right corner.)

Someone from China wants to use your URL. Hmm...

Since my [company](#) produces products for K-12 school administrators, dentists, writers, publishers, and treasure hunt planners, you can count the number of sales that we have made to China on no fingers.

So you can imagine my surprise when a firm from Singapore emailed me that a person was interested in registering my URL in Asia (China primarily)—as their own! The URL in question is “**gordonburgett**”! Hardly an everyday phrase in any form of Chinese (or any other language that I know of). It’s my name, and according to the White Pages a few years back there were only six Gordon Burgetts in the entire country. (A Burgett was a town gatekeeper in the very olde days. No trendsetting there.)

A mystery from afar. The letter was quite professional so it wasn’t easily dismissed. It prompted three images: “a future lawsuit,” a “future shakedown,” or a fairly “sophisticated scam.” I looked at the website that the email came from and it said the firm had 100+ employees registering URLs. Impressive if true.

I checked “Asian URL scams” or “Chinese URL scams” with Google. Nothing. I was on my own.

The first email asked me if the person interested in registering gordonburgett.com was affiliated with or worked with my firm. I wrote back a pleasant no. And I asked why in the world with about a billion URL choices available in Chinese (or so it seems to me, who can't read any of them) waiting to be used, why "gordonburgett"?

This is the follow-up letter I received yesterday.

—
Subject: CN/ASIA domain names & Internet Keyword

Dear Gordon Burgett ,

Based on your company having no relationship with them, we have suggested they should choose another name to avoid this conflict but they insist on this name as CN/ASIA domain names (asia/ cn/ com.cn/ net.cn/ org.cn) and internet keyword on the internet. In our opinion, maybe they do the similar business as your company and register it to promote his company.

According to the domain name registration principle: The domain names and internet keyword which applied based on the international principle are opened to companies as well as individuals. Any companies or individuals have rights to register any domain name and internet keyword which are unregistered. Because your company haven't registered this name as CN/ASIA domains and internet keyword on the internet, anyone can obtain them by registration. However, in order to avoid this conflict, the trademark or original name owner has priority to make this registration in our audit period. If your company is the original owner of this name and want to register these CN/ASIA domain names (asia/ cn/ com.cn/ net.cn/ org.cn) and internet keyword to prevent anybody from using them, please inform us. We can send an application form and the price list to you and help you register these within dispute period.

Kind regards

My name is **hot**! My family likes fortune cookies so they probably suspect that the registry folks from Singapore have some special view into the future, perhaps they see a coming flood of fiscal prosperity, and somebody wants to get good footing before the green deluge occurs.

I'm not quite so certain since most of my fortune cookies say "You will live another day!"

So I decided to let my web server have the last word. His firm is much closer to China than California so he might have some extra insight. His reply? "This is just a scare tactic to get you to register domain names with them."

So I'll leave it there. But I'll keep my eyes open for new airplanes, race cars, or yachts heading East to West bearing the brand name of Gordon Burgett. Thank God I got there first!

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

[Can you use a pseudonym for publishable articles?](#)

Sure, I suppose in print you could call yourself Superperson or Cicero or anybody you want to. And if you own the publication, it might be fine.

In fact, there are times when I would indeed use a pseudonym. Like if I was a deacon writing porno, rest assured I'd change my name. Or if a fanged maniac was loose on the nearby streets and he was overdue on his serial schedule, I'd at least change

a few letters in my surname—and apologize later.

But at least 99% of the time, or more, the question would be “Why?” The first person to ask you that would be the editor—“Why do you want to do that?” (A couple of the editors I wrote for would probably have suggested, rather than a pen name, I might disguise myself by dressing up like a decent citizen—or be inconspicuous by wearing just one sideburn.)

I know that when you write novels they want you to use the same name for the whole series. Folks buy as often as not for the author’s name—they expect the same high (or low) quality for all the books in that category. However, if you use your own name to write the “Manly Man Murder Mysteries,” they will surely want an entirely different name for, say, a group of knitting manuals.

There’s a financial issue too. If you’re Betty Smith and your by-line is Jennie Jones, unless the editor knows about the name replacement, your check will be made out to Jennie Jones—and that check can be a hassle to cash!

Two more considerations: (1) the editor may question your sanity if there’s no reason for the writer not to be you, and (2) he/she may wonder what you are trying to hide by not taking responsibility for the copy you want released, like is it unprovable, a flat-out lie, an exaggeration beyond the pale, out-and-out libel, or too badly written to want your own name attached.

Finally, if you are trying to build up your writing reputation by increasing your volume in print, switching from Ed to Ted to Red to Betty sounds counterproductive.

So, if you want to use a pseudonym, at least clear it with the editor. They need a good laugh now and then. Tell them you saw it done on a television show.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett
