

Info Product Mania

by Tim Whiston



Important!

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Info Product Mania

Over 2 million digital information products were downloaded in 2005 from just one major distribution site. These figures were gathered from a single download site out of hundreds, and certainly do not take into account the millions of other info products that were accessed from independent sources.

According to the Pew Research Center, roughly 90% of all Internet users search the web for some type of information. Based on the average annual growth of global Internet use, it is estimated that the already enormous demand for digital information will be increased by 99,445,365 new information seekers during 2006.

Millions of dollars will be made as a direct result of information marketing this year. Info Product Mania is in full swing with no end in sight.

So how can **you** get a piece of all this action? There are several effective ways to leverage the popularity of information products, and this e-book is going to cover a few of the more powerful methods.

Read through this material carefully, and then take action on what you learn. Ultimately you are responsible for your own results, but the contents of this publication are based on real-life applications that are bringing in nice profits for many Internet entrepreneurs.

Thanks for reading.

Tim Whiston

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What Exactly is a ‘Digital Informaton Product’?

A digital information product is a well-organized piece of content that is placed into an easily downloadable, electronic format. Examples of this type of product include PDF e-books and manuals (like the one you are reading right now), text documents, and executable html downloads.

What makes information marketing an attractive and lucrative field to enter? Great question!

And here are three great answers:

1. With info products, you can offer your customers instant access to your goods by way of digital download. There is no physical inventory to handle, and your overhead costs will be minimal. Info Product Marketing is a business where you can achieve close to a 100% profit margin!
2. With a little set-up work you can create an ongoing, automated income with info product marketing. It's a great feeling to wake up in the morning with payment notifications in your inbox, and to profit from sales that are made while you are out enjoying the day with your friends and family.
3. Creating and marketing your own information products is a fantastic way to build a name for yourself and establish a strong presence in your chosen niche. Knowledgeable individuals in any field are sought after and held in high esteem.

This is my third e-book and while I'm not filthy rich at the time of this writing, I have replaced my day job with info product marketing. I am building a respected name for myself, and I continue to receive payments for work I did one time.

If you read and take action on the contents of this e-book, there is absolutely no reason why you can't duplicate my success. You don't have to be an expert writer or a master marketer to cash in on the digital information market. All it takes is a little basic knowledge, a decent amount of initial effort, and lots of focus and determination.

Distribution Strategies

Info Product Mania was written to teach you the basics of creating your own e-books and digital reports. The subject of effective marketing could easily fill another book ten times the size of this one. However, I will offer a couple of suggestions for maximizing the success of your info product promotions.

There are many ways to distribute information for personal gain, but there are two primary strategies you should be aware of. Either approach is worthwhile, and I recommend a mixture of both strategies within your overall marketing campaign.

Selling Information for Direct Profit

The first strategy is to simply sell a digital info product for front-end profit. Most people can readily identify with this concept.

Most likely, you are already trying to sell something on the web, whether it's an affiliate service, a business opportunity, or a physical product of some sort. So the idea of selling an electronic information package is simple enough to grasp.

Using an Affiliate Program to Increase Your Profits

As a product owner, you can now leverage the power of an affiliate sales force to drive more traffic to your website. Even a small group of active affiliates can result in far more exposure for your product than you could generate by yourself.

[Clickbank](#) and [Paydotcom](#) are two popular systems that will track your affiliate sales for you. However, these services charge you a fee each time a copy of your product is sold.

I guess I'm a bit of a control freak, because I just don't like the idea of paying out fees for selling my own product. For this reason I recommend using an 'in-house' affiliate program.

You can install a simple script on your domain and have complete control of your own affiliate program. Check out this [Great Affiliate Software](#) that makes it easy to add products, track sales, pay commissions, and manage all your affiliates from one feature-packed admin control panel.

Distributing Free Info Products for Viral Exposure or Back-End Profits

This may sound strange, but it is just as easy (and maybe even easier) to profit from information products by giving them away as free gifts.

How is this possible? By using free info products to leverage the power of viral marketing and open the door for back-end sales.

Viral Marketing

Viral marketing is an advertising strategy that uses ‘word-of-mouth’ type promotion to spread a marketing message very quickly to a large number of people. In essence, this method of promotion allows you to create an army of marketers who are advertising your website for you.

Distributing free info products is one of the easiest ways to create this effect.

For instance, let’s say you have an e-book that contains the links to your website and favorite affiliate programs. You could give this book away to your existing contacts, or as a bonus for joining your mailing list. Naturally, the people you give the book to are likely to follow some of the links, and if they buy, sign-up, etc. from these links you’ll benefit.

That’s pretty cool, but considers this: What if you encouraged the people who got the book from you to turn around and give it away to their own contacts as a free gift? They could offer it as a thank you to their downlines, or use it as an incentive in their offers. In this scenario, you could have several hundred people handing out an e-book that is full of your links!

You could even place a statement on the first page declaring that anyone in possession of the book has the right to give it away freely. So people you have never even spoken to might end up distributing a product that contains your personal business links. There is no end to the amount of exposure this technique can generate when applied correctly.

Back-end Sales

A back-end sale is a transaction that is made after an initial relationship has been formed. In many cases, this type of sale is made once someone has accepted a free offer or subscribed to a free mailing list of some sort.

In the above example of Viral Marketing, back-end sales would be made when recipients of the free e-book purchase products and services through the business links inside the book. This is a beautiful example of how you can do a little set-up work and get paid for it on an ongoing basis.

Another great way to set up back-end sales is to offer a free info product as a bonus for joining your opt-in mailing list. You might give your subscribers a free e-book for subscribing to your newsletter, for instance.

And of course, once you have an individual on your personal mailing list you can offer them any number of valuable products and services. Opt-in marketing is the bread and butter of most Internet entrepreneurs, and using a free gift like a quality info product to build your list is a tested and proven method.

For professional, step-by-step instruction on how to build, manage, and generate revenue with your own mailing list I recommend [Opt-in Master Course](#). This resource is free to use and provides a great opportunity to learn the fundamentals of both successful list building and viral marketing.

Creating Your Own Info Products

Developing your own products is by far the most favorable approach to information marketing. When you create your own e-books, special reports, etc., you have total control of the content and you can set the pricing and distribution strategy without third-party limitations.

Being an entrepreneur is about having control of your life and running your business the way you see fit. Creating and marketing your own line of products is the best way to fulfill this objective, and digital information products offer you the absolute maximum in flexibility and cost-effectiveness.

Whether you are an experienced writer or a complete newbie, there is nothing terribly difficult about rolling out a quality info product with your name on it. If you are smart enough to read through this book without a struggle, you have all the brainpower required for successful info product creation.

Your Idea

Every good info product begins with a simple idea. This doesn't necessarily have to be a new idea, and certainly doesn't need to be a concept that will change the world. An interesting topic is all you need to start.

The three main reasons people seek out information are:

1. Entertainment
2. To increase their knowledge of a particular subject.
3. To solve a specific problem or set of problems.

Just about everyone has some kind of knowledge that would satisfy one or more of the above desires within a particular niche. Remember that information products exist within every market, category, genre, and sector imaginable.

Simply pick a topic you like and start brainstorming. Below are just a few generic ideas off the top of my head that could be turned into a successful information product with a small amount of work.

- Managing stress through diet and exercise
- Tips for building a more active downline in your favorite MLM
- How to improve your chess game
- Basic computer hardware maintenance
- Getting more out of your weight training sessions
- Unique names for your pets
- Finding the right affiliate program for you
- How to buy a car without getting ripped off
- Organic herb gardening for newbies
- Protecting yourself from identity theft
- How to win at poker
- Money saving tips for newlyweds
- How to reduce algae levels in your water garden during the hot season
- Surviving your first semester of college
- How time management can improve your life
- Mastering the art of persuasion
- A collection of low-fat dessert recipes
- How to improve your credit score
- Using one-time offers to increase your profits
- Basic website design
- Tips on how to quit smoking
- How to improve your memory

As you can see, info products can be launched from even the simplest of ideas. That's what makes information marketing such a great business model for new entrepreneurs. It takes very little money to put an e-book or downloadable report together, and when you choose a topic that interests you the whole project can be a lot of fun.

Obviously, if you already have a website of your own you should tie your new info product into the theme of that site. A special report or e-book is a great way to promote an existing business.

Market Research

Before you get too involved in the process of developing your info product, you need to be relatively certain there is a demand for the exact type of information you have chosen for your topic. With millions and millions of content hungry surfers on the web, there is a great chance you can find a market for your information, but it's still best to do a little research up front.

Here are a few easy ways to do some preliminary market research:

1. Use the [Overture Search Term Tool](#) to enter some keyword phrases that are related to your topic. This great little keyword tool will then show you exactly how many times these phrases were searched for throughout the entire Overture network during the previous month. This exercise will give you a solid idea of what kind of interest exists for the topic you have chosen.
2. Do a quick [Google](#) search on the same keyword phrases and check the number of search results pulled up by your query. If there are only a couple thousand total results, this could indicate that no large competition exists for your subject. On the other hand, if your search brings up a very large number of results you'll know there are lots of other people marketing the same type of content. You should spend some time visiting and bookmarking the websites that come up as a result of these searches in order to get an idea of how your competition is targeting the market.
3. If your info product is going to be an e-book, you should search [Amazon.com](#) and [EbookMall.com](#) for related content. This will give you a basic idea of both current demand and existing competition for your project.

Once you have done some initial research, you might want to get involved in a few forums or discussion groups that are related to your topic. Networking with people who represent your target market is an excellent way to get an idea of how viable your product will be.

Also, if you already have an opt-in mailing list related to your chosen topic, by all means poll them about their interest in your product idea. In this scenario, you would be getting feedback from the ideal source – your warm market prospects.

One of the most common mistakes made by new entrepreneurs is to first create a product, and then look for an audience to market to. This is a horrible approach. It's up to you how far to take the research phase of your project, but I highly recommend at least giving a good deal of attention to the suggestions in this section. The last thing you want to do is spend your precious time developing an info product that nobody wants.

Trust me. I've done this before and it's no fun at all. I was sure I had a real winner on my hands, but almost no one bought my product when I took it to market.

The bottom line is simple. If you are creating a product for the purpose of generating profits, it really makes no difference how good you think your idea is; it only matters what the people you plan to promote to think.

If there is a market for what you are offering, go for it. If not, save yourself a lot of heartache and move on to something else.

Writing Your Own Content

Many people are intimidated by the idea of writing, but let's be honest. We're talking about information here, not poetry.

You don't need to be an expert writer, or even have a 'way with words' to create a quality information product. All you need is a good handle on the English language and the ability to communicate your ideas in a straightforward manner.

Of course if you plan to write the product yourself, it is also important that you have a working knowledge of the subject matter. This isn't necessarily true if you are going to utilize private label material or hire a professional writer, but if you intend to produce the content from scratch I highly recommend you go with a topic you have some knowledge of.

Basic Tools

Specific formats for finished products will be discussed later, but to get the ball rolling all you need is a basic word processing application. I recommend using a program that offers spell-check, allows you to insert images, and is compatible with PDF conversion software.

Here are a few recommendations for your word processing needs.

[Microsoft Word](#) – Certainly not perfect, but in my opinion the best alternative. Word offers the full suite of editorial options and is reasonably user-friendly.

[Open Office](#) – A completely free office suite. Open office works just fine for the basics, but many users have reported problems when trying to insert screen shots and convert documents to PDF format.

[Word Pad or Text Edit](#) – These are the bare bones word processors that come with Windows or Mac operating systems. These resources are quite usable, but they do not support the comprehensive array of features found in more robust applications.

Reference Material Links

It's also good to have some good reference material on hand as you compose your product. Here are the links to some of the resources I use.

[Answers.com](#) and [About.com](#) - These are two very slick encyclopedia style sites that contain loads of content on just about any subject you can think of.

[Dictionary.com](#) – Online dictionary and thesaurus.

[Babel Fish](#) – Online language translation tool.

[Basic Calculator](#) – For the mathematically impaired.

[Percent Calculator](#) – Find percentages for your statistics with a few clicks.

And if your word processor of choice doesn't have all the bells and whistles of Microsoft Word...

[Online Spell Check](#)

[Word and Character Counter](#)

Your Initial Outline

Once you have an idea in mind and have done some research, you should type out a basic outline for your info product. An outline is nothing more than a visual draft of what you intend to convey with your info product.

For this exercise, you will simply begin with your main idea statement, and expand on this statement with supporting ideas. Here is an example of how an outline might look if you were producing a digital report on time management.

- I. Making Better Use of Your Time
 - A. Getting Organized
 - 1. Writing Down Your Goals
 - 2. Using a Daily Checklist
 - B. Eliminating Unproductive Activities
 - 1. Staying Focused on What Matters
 - 2. Weeding out the Excess

Organizing your thoughts in this manner will help you to streamline the process of writing. Your initial outline will change as you hammer out your product and that's fine; the point is to have a strong plan to work from.

The Composition Process

OK, so now you have your idea, the basic tools you need to get started, and an outline for your work. You can't put it off anymore; it's time to start cranking out some content.

The first thing you need to do is set a specific schedule for your writing sessions. You might choose to write for an hour after dinner each night, thirty minutes each morning before work, or whatever. Stick to your work schedule at all costs, and do not allow anything to distract you from your project during these periods.

It's definitely best to spend some time on your project each day until you are finished. Consistency is the key to building and keeping a productive rhythm. In most cases twenty minutes every day will result in more content and higher quality than one long session per week.

I have found the very best way to write is to just sit down in front of my keyboard and start hammering away. Don't put too much thought into it at first. Just look at your outline and pick a place to start.

Ironically, the first page you type does not have to be the first section in your outline. Putting the pieces together neatly doesn't come until the editing phase of your project.

This suggestion drives some people nuts, but it's how I do it and I have to be honest with my instruction. A lot of writers have a much more formal approach to composition and that's great. But I'm not a very structured writer at all; I just start putting content onto a page and worry about organization after I have something to work with.

It is generally much easier to write a clean piece of copy if you use words and phrases you feel comfortable with. Don't try to impress your reader with grammatical gymnastics, just be yourself and state your ideas clearly.

Type your message the same way you would say it if you were talking to a friend. In fact, reading your content out loud is a great way to check your work as you go.

Your primary objective should be to communicate detailed information in a manner that is easy for your reader to understand. Each section of your work should cover a complete idea, and should do so in language the average high school student can grasp.

If there is a writer whose style you admire, take their approach and put your own twist on it. Or if you recall a particular article that struck a chord with you, by all means imitate the feel of that work.

I am **not** telling you to steal from another author. But I am saying there is nothing at all wrong with taking techniques and expressions you have seen before and using these in your own content. The key here is to use existing work as your model, and to apply your personality to this model.

You should use a notebook or mini-recorder to save any new ideas you come up with between writing sessions. You never know when a great thought is going to emerge. Interestingly enough, most of my best ideas occur when I'm away from my desk. But thanks to my handy mini-recorder, I can save those thoughts to audio and transcribe them to word during my next session. Nearly all successful writers use this technique.

Effective info product creation is 90% time and attention, and only 10% writing skill. Remember that you aren't putting together a novel or a screenplay. The point of a well-written info product is to teach the reader about a particular subject, not to sweep them away with dramatic imagery and professional quality prose.

Proofreading and Editing

I like to proofread my work as I go. I also begin and end each writing session with a quick check of my work. And of course a good word processor or online editing tool will also help you minimize errors in your spelling and grammar.

Each time you open your document for another session you are likely to have new ideas on how to improve your existing content. Successful writing is really about re-writing.

Once you have a complete draft copy of your info product, go back through and make sure the content arrangement flows in a logical manner. Does the material progress from the initial idea to the conclusion in a way that makes sense? You may need to reorder some of the sections or chapters to achieve the ideal format.

After you have gone over your draft copy at least three times, it's a good idea to find a beta reader for your product. This can be a friend, an associate, etc. who is willing to give your copy a quick read and offer any feedback they may have. Having another person look over what you have written will allow you to get an objective opinion on how well you have communicated your ideas through the content of your product.

Take the feedback you receive on a professional level. Don't freak out just because someone makes a critical comment or two. You asked for feedback, right? Just decide whether or not you wish to make any suggested changes and move forward.

At this point, you will have thoroughly proofread your content, and received feedback from another reader. It is now time to hand your product off to a professional for the final edit.

Don't skip this part of the process! The best authors on the planet still need an editor to help them refine their work. Heck, even the service manual that came with your DVD player went through a basic line editing before it was published. If you are truly interested in turning out a top quality info product, it is imperative that you have a pro perform the final edit for you.

I use and highly recommend [OVEditing](#). This service is owned by Pat Marcello, professional editor and author of ten successful books. No matter how good your work is Pat will make it better. And her fees are a drop in the bucket compared to the value she will add to your product content.

Converting Your Document to PDF

PDF, or Portable Document Format, is the file type of choice for professional info product marketers. This type of document can easily be opened and viewed on any computer operating system, and therefore allows publishers to reach the largest possible market.

You'll need special software to convert your text document to PDF. Programs like [Adobe](#) and [Jaws](#) are highly recommended, but also costly. You can acquire a free suite of PDF printing and editing software through [PDF 995](#).

This free PDF suite is fully functional, and gives you everything you need to start. But you get what you pay for in life, so be aware this product is not without a few bugs.

You can use pre-made PDF templates to improve the visual appeal of your product. I have assembled 100 cool templates, which you may download free of charge [here](#).

I know. I'm a cool guy.

Rebrandable Info Products

One of the best ways to push a viral marketing campaign is to allow other people to add their own information right into your product. For instance, you could create an e-book and then give your customers a way to add their name and website URL on the front page. You might also allow them to insert their referral IDs into any affiliate links you have placed within the book. This strategy gives people an incentive for distributing their customized copy of your product because they will be getting exposure for their own name and business links in the process.

Rebrandable info products create a win-win situation for both you and your customers. Consider this scenario:

You create a special report promoting your product or favorite business opportunity. You then use specialized software to make the report rebrandable so your affiliates/downline can add their name and affiliate IDs in place of yours.

Your affiliates and/or downline now have a good reason for distributing the report to their contacts. When people who receive the report use the links within to purchase a product or join an opportunity, both you and your distributors will benefit from this action.

At the time of this writing, there are a couple of options available for making your PDF product rebrandable. I use a tool called [Viral PDF](#) to create rebrandable info products for my own viral marketing campaigns.

I've created some very nice results with rebrandable products. However, you should understand this technology is far from flawless.

[Viral PDF](#) occasionally disrupts the arrangement of your text, and can also cause false error messages when opening documents with Adobe Reader. I still use and recommend this tool, but I did want to make you aware of these two drawbacks.

Virtual Packaging and Delievery

When you have a completed product, all you need to do is package it and then upload it to the web where your customers can get instant access to it once they have paid or signed up to your mailing list. You can use a free [Zip Utility](#) to compress your product file for a faster download experience. And uploading the zipped file to your domain is a piece of cake using [Core FTP](#). Once your product is in place on the web, just give authorized customers the URL and let them download your digital package with ease, any time they wish.

Your First Impression – an eCover for Your Product

The saying “Don’t judge a book by the cover” has no place in the information marketing arena. In fact the quality of your cover design will have an enormous impact on your prospect’s decision to download your product.

The Internet is a visual medium as well as a source of great content. People want to be dazzled by sharp graphics and well-designed web pages.

You could have the best e-book ever written, but if your cover looks like crap nobody is going to buy it. Sad but true.

If you have the skills to create your own cover graphics, I salute you. If not, you’ll need to hire a professional for this task.

Resist the temptation to purchase software that promises to create e-covers for you ‘with the click of a button’. Every product of this nature that I have come across is a total joke.

While I am capable of basic design work, I don’t have what it takes to whip up a top-quality cover for my e-books. This is not a problem, because I know someone who does awesome graphics work at very reasonable rates.

All of my covers are designed by [LovellTechnology](#), and I strongly endorse this service for your info product covers as well. Drop by their website and have a look at some of their previous projects. Then once you have seen the quality of their work for yourself,

hit the contact link and ask them to talk to you about a quote for your project. These guys are top-notch and they won't charge you a fortune for a simple cover job.

Conclusion

At this point you have all the basic knowledge it takes to create your very own info product. The information business can be very lucrative with the right marketing plan.

But you should realize that effective promotion requires a good deal of planning, determination, and time. Don't expect to make a big load of money overnight with your first info product. There are no magic bullets, secret formulas, or proven systems for success on the Internet, despite what you may have been told.

It is safe to say, however, that marketing digital information is easier on the back than digging ditches. It is also far more rewarding than sitting in a cubicle all day under the intense scrutiny of some over-paid Nazi or an office manager. And over time, info product marketing can become a very profitable venture.

I wish you the very best in all your future endeavors, and I invite you to contact me at any time with your questions and comment.

Thanks for your time, and have a good one.

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