

E-ZINE LAUNCH

How To **Create**, Publish And **Market** Your Own **E-zine** On The **Internet**

By **Dr.Mani Sivasubramanian, M.D.**

IF

- You **want** to publish an e-zine - **but don't know** how.
- You **already** publish an e-zine - **but want to make it better**.
- You **have** the best e-zine - **but are curious to see what I'm saying**.

THEN

This book is for YOU

This book is about **creating and distributing your own profitable e-zine** on the Internet. It is about **bringing out the very best e-zines**. It is about **becoming a widely read, respected and famous e-publisher**.

E-ZINE LAUNCH

The **E-book** to help launch your **E-zine**

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LEGAL NOTICES

<Note: My lawyer made me put this in – sorry ! If you'd rather get on with it, skip this section and go right to the heart of the matter – [click here.](#)>

The author, Dr.Mani Sivasubramanian, and the publishers, Heart Disease Online, have made all reasonable efforts to put together an e-book that will be useful for people venturing into the exciting field of e-publishing, and have tried to ensure that the information in this book is helpful, correct and current.

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1. Getting **Around** This E-book

Unlike many others, I've tried to make this e-book **fun** to read. Which means I've tried to make it **easy to get around**.

Scroll Bar – Along the right side of this book, you'll find a Scroll Box. By placing your mouse cursor over it and clicking, you can have the page number pop-up. By dragging the Scroll Box up or down, you can move through the book.

Keyboard – By clicking on the UP and DOWN arrows on your keyboard, you can move through this book one page at a time.

Contents – There is a complete table of contents on Page 5 which you can access from anywhere in the book by either typing 5 into the page number box at the bottom of your screen, or by clicking on **DOCUMENT** on the menu at the top of your screen and then on **GO TO PAGE** and entering 5 in the pop up box.

Magnification – To view the text in larger or smaller size, you can modify the magnification by clicking on VIEW and then ZOOM TO. In the box that pops up, select the size you like and click OK.

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2. Introduction to E-Zine Launch

In the past 24 hours, around **30,000 people** fired up their web browsers and surfed the Internet - **for the very first time in their lives!** This is in addition to the millions of others who have been online for months or years.

At least some of these people are interested in **getting to know you**. They would like to visit your website, hear your views and opinions on issues, even buy your product or order your services.

Wouldn't you like to help them do this?

I'll bet you said "YES".

And the **best, easiest and least expensive** way to let them know about you is by publishing an E-mail newsletter ... or **E - Z i n e .**

"**How do I get started with my own e-zine ?**" is one of the most frequent questions I get asked as an expert e-zine publisher. This e-book is a step-by-step tutorial to kick-start your thrilling voyage as an e-zine publisher.

Without wasting any more time on formalities, let's begin ! Onwards and forwards

2.1 What is an E-Zine ?

An Electronic Magazine - or **E-zine** - is a document that is *distributed in an electronic format* over the Internet by e-mail. A variant is the **Web-Zine**, which is displayed on an Internet web page.

2.2 Why did e-zines happen?

The Internet exploded upon Mankind. And brought with it access to an enormous volume of information. It is impossible today for anyone to keep pace

with this growth. Searching for a specific kind of information in the electronic wilderness is an overwhelming and forbidding task.

Enter, the **E-Zine**.

E-zines offer a solution to this problem by delivering content to readers, just like newspapers and magazines deliver information to subscribers. A good e-zine will provide information or direct readers to places where it is available.

An E-zine is a **Guide to the Best of the Net** on a topic!

2.3 Should you **publish** an E-zine ?

Well, only you can decide.

But my advice to you is "**YES, Just Do It**"

Why?

There are many benefits in publishing your own e-zine.

- You will be **perceived as an expert** on the subject matter of your e-zine
- You can **remind your reader** to come back and visit your website
- An e-zine is **more widely - and easily - accessible** than a web page
- You can cut through the clutter and **deliver relevant information** to your audience
- And you can do it **conveniently and inexpensively**
- You can **develop new contacts**, find clients, grow a network
- You can **provide timely and up-to-date content** to your prospective customer

- You get **permission to send e-mail** to your readers - a very important benefit in this age of spam awareness and permission marketing
- Your **brand** gets increasing awareness
- You can **generate revenue** from your e-zine

**An e-zine is inexpensive, universally accessible,
instant and interactive**

Every single subscriber has signed up for your e-zine, expecting to hear about you, your ideas, your products and your services. Publishing your own e-zine is your chance to impress them, help them get useful information, gain their trust, respect and confidence - and ultimately, become their friend.



E - Z - L - Your Strategy

Do you want to start your own e-zine ?	
Yes, I want to - right away !	<input type="checkbox"/>
No, I'm still not convinced	<input type="checkbox"/>

STRATEGIC THINKING

- Chalking out a game plan

3. Introduction to **Strategic** Thinking

So now, if you are convinced about the need to start your own e-zine, let's get down to the nitty gritty of setting one up.

The section on Strategic Thinking belongs **at the beginning** of any course on e-zine publishing, if only because it is the area where least effort is spent. And that is wrong.

Because the **most important** thing that sets apart a great e-zine from a mediocre one is its obvious **adherence to a well thought-out strategic plan**.

This section is short. But it is the portion you should spend the **most time** on.

Try not to hurry through it, but instead think out each of these issues in depth and formulate a plan that will be **your route-map to successful e-zine publishing** in the years to come.

3.1 Setting Targets

Without definite goals or targets, your e-zine will flounder and drift. With a firm objective and a concrete game plan, you can soon be in the big leagues.

As a first step, ask yourself these questions - and come up with specific answers.

- What are you **good at**?
- At whom is your e-zine **targeted**?
- Why are you **creating your e-zine**?

3.1.1 What are you **good at** ?

Nothing ? Think again.

Everyone has something they love; something they know well and enjoy doing; something that is a hobby or a passion.

- **Technical** skills like computer programming
- **Emotional** issues like bringing up children with cerebral palsy
- **Day-to-day** things like gardening or cooking
- **Esoteric** topics like searching for signs of alien intelligence
- **Hobbies** like travelling, knitting, racing or yachting

... something.

Anything !

You can weave an e-zine around **any topic or issue** that you enjoy, that you love, that you are passionate about, that you enjoy reading, talking and writing about.

You don't have to be an expert (though that would be an added advantage). You don't even have to know much about your topic - just **be enthusiastic** about it.

Once you identify such a topic, your passion will convey itself to your reader, suck them into your vortex, get them involved and keep them loyal subscribers. Over time, **your e-zine will develop a spirit and life of its own.**

A few other guidelines to help you choose a topic are:

- Try and select a niche that **is not already dominated** by other e-zines
- **Be unique.** Put a new spin on an old topic and you'll have a winner
- See if the subject area is **broad enough** to sustain interest over time
- Determine whether **advertisers will find it interesting**



E - Z - L - Your Strategy

How to pick your topic ?

Step 1

Start by picking up a sheet of paper and writing down a list of topics that interest you. Pick 5 or even 10 subjects that you care about.

Step 2

Then, for each topic, answer these 5 questions:

1. Does this topic interest you, excite you?	
a. Yes, very much	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. It's ok	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. No, not really	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Are there other e-zines covering this topic?	
a. No, mine is the first	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. I'm not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Yes, there are many	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Can you write useful stuff about this topic?	
a. Yes, a lot	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Maybe, a little	<input type="checkbox"/>

c. Not really	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Will this information help many people?	
a. Yes, it interests many people	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Well, some people will benefit	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. No, not many enthusiasts here	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do you know a lot about your topic?	
a. Yes, I'm the expert	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Enough to write about it	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. No, I'm a novice	<input type="checkbox"/>

Step 3

Now rate your responses. For every question you chose "a", give yourself 3 points, for every "b" response, 2 points and for every time you answered "c", score 1 point.

Add your score. Do this for each topic/subject you listed.

Step 4

Now rank your topics in order of highest score. The top 3 are the ones you are best suited to write about.

Choose one out of these 3 - remember to **select the one you are most passionate about**, the one that you would love to write about. That way, bringing out each issue of your newsletter will be a pleasure instead of appearing like a chore.



3.1.2 For whom are you writing ?

Different strokes for different folks.

Even for e-zines on the same topic, writing styles will vary depending on your reader. Make a determined effort to **try and define your potential reader**. This will help you decide upon

- the **content** of your e-zine
- your **advertising strategy** to attract them to your e-zine
- the **products / services** you will offer through your e-zine

You need to **Get Inside** Your Reader's Mind

E - Z - L - Your Strategy

How to determine your reader's interest ?

Try and be as specific as possible. It is best to write down the characteristics of your intended audience.

- What **interests** do they share ?
- How **old** are they ?
- What is their **educational status** ?
- Where do they **live** ?
- How much do they **earn** ?
- **Spend** ?
- On **what items** ?

And most important - **Why are they reading your e-zine** ? In other words...

3.1.3 What is your e-zine's purpose ?

It is critical to answer this question before you begin.

On the Internet, and in e-zine publishing, always remember this important fact - **YOUR CUSTOMER ALWAYS COMES FIRST.**

If you spend a few hours trying to figure out **what your reader expects to find** in your e-zine, it will go a long way in establishing your publication as a valuable resource.

E - Z - L - Your Strategy

How to find out **what** your reader **wants**?

Once again, make a list on a sheet of paper.

Step 1

Calculate **guesswork**. Put yourself in your customer's shoes. If you signed up to receive an e-zine like yours, what would **you** expect to find?

Step 2

Poll friends and family. Ask your near and dear ones for suggestions. Tell them about your plan to create an e-zine. Ask them what they'd like to see in it.

Step 3

Conduct a **survey**. If you have a website, or participate in other online discussions, you might ask others for their opinions and comments.

Step 4

Watch your **competition**. Your competitors might have an e-zine on your topic. Subscribe to it, see what it contains, judge whether it is relevant, useful and of good quality. Then plan to improve on it.

Competitor	E-zine Name	Contents	Your Rating	How To Make It Better

Step 5

Answer some questions

Do you want to instruct and educate (articles, news updates), entertain (jokes, riddles), inspire (quotes)	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
---	------------------------------

(jokes, riddles), inspire (quotes, advice) or sell (products, services)?	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Is your e-zine a vehicle to serve advertisements to readers?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Is it a way to invite people to visit your website, or to contact you?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Is it to announce new additions to your site, or special offers and discounts , or a new product launch?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Step 6

Write down the best and most popular ideas. Sort the ideas in order of priority. Decide upon how you are going to meet these requirements.

Step 7

On the basis of this decision, develop your own **USP - Unique Selling Proposition**. In a short sentence (or two), not exceeding 30 words, **describe your e-zine**, its purpose and how you plan to achieve it.

My USP is:

[thirty word sentence here]

Whatever you choose to do with your e-zine, **define it before you begin**. Over time, you will then be able to monitor progress, and see whether or not you are progressing steadily towards this goal.



3.2 What's in a Name ?

Naming Your E-zine is one of the first, and most important, strategic moves you need to make. This might appear elementary. But **many factors** lie behind the choice of a great name for your e-publication.

1. Is the name catchy, memorable, short ?

A name like "Mark Joyner's Crazy Car Accessory And Roadways Kit E-zine" might be descriptive. But will people remember it? Instead, try "Mark's Crazy Car-zine"

2. Is the name relevant ?

Try and pick a name that is related to the subject matter of your content.

3. Is the name descriptive ?

If possible, your name must tell potential subscribers what to expect from your e-zine, or at least provide a hint. e.g. Weekly Marketing Tips E-zine

4. Is the domain name available ?

Once you've decided upon a name, check to see if the web domain name is available. For instance, if you've decided to call your e-zine "Heart Beat", see if www.heartbeat.com is available.

If it is, **reserve it. Now !**

If it isn't, you may decide to

- **revise your decision** and choose another name
- **look for variations** on your choice e.g. www.heart-beat.com
- **see if** .net, .org or other extensions are available e.g. www.heartbeat.net

5. How will it rank in directories and search engines ?

E-zine directories and search engines will list your e-zine in alphabetical order. Try and pick a name that will take advantage of this fact.

Don't call it "AAAA Heart Beat", that sounds amateurish !

But if your e-zine is about the flu, you might call itwell **Aaatchoo!** <bless you>

6. What is its **brand value** ?

Your e-zine will be your unique branding tool. It will put your name, or your business' name, in front of your reader at regular intervals. The **name** you choose should **exploit the branding value** of your e-zine.

E - Z - L - Your Strategy

How to pick your e-zine's name ?

Step 1

Pick up a sheet of paper and write down:

- the **topic / subject** of your e-zine
- a **description** of your e-zine in up to 25 words
- your **name** (or the name of your business/product/service that you want to brand)

Step 2

- out of these words, pick the **top 4 or 5 keywords** - that is, words that matter the most in describing the content of your e-zine
- list them in **alphabetical order**
- try and find at least one word in **the top 5 letters** - A,B,C,D or E

Step 3

Now put on your creative cap !

Start **thinking originally, uniquely, out-of-the-box**. Mix and match these top keywords into a short, pithy, descriptive title. Keep in mind the criteria discussed above.

Sure, it's tough. Hey, no one ever promised this was going to be easy 😊

Step 4

Get opinions and feedback from friends and family. They might surprise you with some wonderful suggestions.

Step 5

Then, check if the domain name is available. Visit the **InterNIC** website at

<http://www.networksolutions.com/cgi-bin/whois/whois>

and check to see if your name is still available. If it is, **GRAB IT**.

You can reserve a domain name for 2 years by paying just \$70. There are many new domain registrars; one of the least expensive I've found is **TotalNIC** at

<http://www.totalnic.net/>

If the name you've decided upon (or its variant) has been taken, go back to step 1 and try again - until you get that **elusive GREAT e-zine name**.

Believe me, it is **well worth the time and effort you spend**.

3.3 Should your e-zine **contain** advertising?

Whether or not you should run advertisements in your e-zine is another important strategic decision to be taken - ideally **before** you send out your first issue.

Allowing ads into your e-zine is a **double-edged sword**. It can have advantages; at the same time it could become troublesome.

Benefits of running ads in your e-zine

- it **generates revenue** which compensates your time and expense in publishing the e-zine
- when used properly, it provides your reader **added value** in the form of information about products and services related to your e-zine's topic
- it offers a chance to **promote your own products**, services or affiliate programs that you join
- it gives you a chance to **participate in ad swaps** to grow your e-zine

Disadvantages associated with advertising in your e-zine

- it might cast some doubt on the **credibility of your content**, and raises the question of bias
- some **readers might be offended** at the attempt to sell them something, and might sign off
- when overused, the ads might leave valuable **content buried and hard to find**
- if a product or service you advertise is bad, you might be **tainted by association**

So, in summary, the decision to allow advertisements into your e-zine would be an individual one that only you can make.

Can you **wait and decide** later ?

I would advice **against that** because:

- when long-time subscribers suddenly notice ads in a hitherto 'ad-free' e-zine, they might object strongly
- advertisers are difficult to find, and often your readers will recommend them; by running ads, you let readers know that your e-zine accepts advertisers and sponsors
- by remaining consistent in policy, you appear more professional



E - Z - L - Your Strategy

Will your e-zine contain advertisements ?	
Yes, there will be ads	<input type="checkbox"/>
No, there won't be ads	<input type="checkbox"/>



3.4 How often to publish ?

To help you answer this question, I'll ask you two more !

1. Will you be **annoying** your readers ?
2. Will you have **time** ?

Your answers will help decide upon the optimal frequency for your e-zine.



3.4.1 How often is **TOO** often ?

The moment your e-zine **stops** delivering valuable content, it **becomes a nuisance**.

The best publishing schedule will vary for different e-zines. An e-zine that delivers news stories or stock market tips might merit daily updates. An e-zine on ancient history won't!

Today, almost everybody is drowning under a deluge of e-mail. People are spending a lot of time sifting through over-flowing inboxes and trying to find those few gems of knowledge and wisdom scattered amidst junk mail, Get-Rich-Quick schemes and MLM invites.

This is exactly what your reader too is experiencing.

As an e-zine publisher, you have a responsibility –

To avoid being a nuisance to your subscribers.

The only way to ensure this is by **making your e-zine valuable**. Be known as a publisher who **over-delivers** on a promise of fresh, useful and essential content.

That way, subscribers will treasure your e-zine. It will stand out from the crowd of pretenders. Your e-zine will **keep the reader's finger off the DELETE key**.

So identify your reader's needs before planning your e-zine distribution schedule. And then over-deliver with content.



3.4.2 Can you be **on time** always ?

Deciding to publish an e-zine means making a commitment to being consistent. Once you have chosen your publishing schedule, **you must meet it. Always. Without exceptions.**

This is **critical** to your e-zine's success.

So **don't** burn yourself out. Remember, you can **have fun publishing** your e-zine.

Be conservative. If you think you can manage a weekly e-zine, start off publishing every fortnight. If you are confident about handling a daily issue, begin with a weekly. **Later, if you like, increase the frequency.**

3.4.3 How **long** will it take to **prepare** your e-zine ?

Nothing is set in stone. On an average, an e-zine issue might take **between 2 and 5 hours** of work to prepare and send out.

This includes gathering or creating content, compiling, editing, proofreading, spell-checking and distributing to a list.

What will happen if you miss an issue ?

Simple. **You lose credibility.**

If it happens often, your readers may choose to **cancel their subscription**. Or worse, they'll **trash your e-zine without even reading it !**

And that is something that you should **avoid at any cost.**

So take your time, analyse your readers' needs, consider your own limitations, and then hit upon the best frequency for your e-zine.

Ideally, it should be one that will keep your **subscribers informed, interested, entertained** - and **Looking Forward Eagerly** to the next issue!

E - Z - L - Your Strategy

1. Does your e-zine deliver timely content ?	
a. Yes, it does	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. No, not really	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Does the content merit frequent updates ?	
a. Yes, at least daily	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Somewhat, maybe once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. No, not very often	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Will publishing your e-zine annoy readers if you do it	
a. Daily	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Weekly	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
c. Monthly	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
d. Less often	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Can you regularly afford to spend 2 to 5 hours on your e-zine.... ?	
a. Daily	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Weekly	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

c. Monthly	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
d. Less often	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

3.5 How will you **manage** change ?

In a rapidly evolving medium like the Internet, the only constant is change. As an e-publisher, you must plan for change.

3.5.1 **Setting Targets and Monitoring Progress**

An e-zine offers some easily measured **metrics to assess progress**.

The most essential number is your **subscriber count**. It is a measure of your promotional and marketing efforts. A steady, if slow, growth curve is heartening news.

Another statistic to monitor is the **percentage of your readership that 'un-subscribes'** or discontinues receiving your e-zine. This is an index of the **'utility value'** of your e-zine. A high quality e-zine that consistently provides useful information will have a very low rate of removal requests.

A third is the **revenue generated** from your e-zine. [More about this later.](#)

3.5.2 **Mapping Future Direction**

When necessary, you need to be able to **change direction quickly**. At the same time, frequent modifications can make you look indecisive and unprofessional.

Try **not** to make **major alterations** to your e-zine more often than **every six months**.

3.5.3 How do you **decide** about change ?

1. **Ask your reader**. In every issue, make sure to request feedback and suggestions from your subscribers. Take note of issues that crop up often.
 2. **Talk to fellow publishers**. Don't reinvent the wheel. Experienced e-publishers might help with valuable ideas, caution against pitfalls and teach you some neat tricks.
 3. **Study the competition**. See what other e-zines in your niche are doing, the direction they are taking, the content that works for them. Imitation isn't only the best form of flattery - it also works.
-

E - Z - L - Your Strategy

Step 1

Set targets for readership, removals and revenues

Target subscriber count - either per issue, or per month, or per quarter. It might be a fixed number, or a percentage of your existing subscriber base e.g. you could decide to target a growth rate of X % per issue.

TARGET SUBSCRIBER COUNT		
ISSUE NUMBER	FORMULA	ACTUAL COUNT
1	[A]	
2	[B] = [A] + X % of [A]	
3	[C] = [B] + X % of [B]	
4	[D] = [C] + X % of [C]	

--	--	--



Target un-subscribe count

TARGET UN-SUBSCRIBE COUNT		
ISSUE NUMBER	FORMULA	ACTUAL COUNT
1	[E]	
2	[F] = below X % of [E]	
3	[G] = below X % of [F]	
4	[H] = below X % of [G]	



Target revenue

TARGET REVENUE	
ISSUE NUMBER	REVENUE
1	\$ --- L ---
2	\$ --- M ---
3	\$ --- N ---
4	\$ --- O ---



Step 2

Monitor progress

Draw a table on a sheet of paper (or create a spreadsheet using a program like MS-Excel). Periodically (once every week or month), record the number of subscribers you have. On another chart, record the un-subscribe requests.

Progress Chart - Subscriber Count

PROGRESS CHART – SUBSCRIBER COUNT			
ISSUE NUMBER	TARGET	ACTUAL COUNT	PERFORMANCE
1	[A]		+ / - []%
2	[B]		+ / - []%
3	[C]		+ / - []%
4	[D]		+ / - []%



Progress Chart - Un-subscribes

PROGRESS CHART – UN-SUBSCRIBE COUNT			
ISSUE NUMBER	TARGET	ACTUAL COUNT	PERFORMANCE
1	[E]		+ / - []%
2	[F]		+ / - []%
3	[G]		+ / - []%
4	[H]		+ / - []%

Progress Chart – Revenues

PROGRESS CHART – REVENUES			
ISSUE NUMBER	TARGET	ACTUAL COUNT	PERFORMANCE
1	\$ L		+ / - []%
2	\$ M		+ / - []%
3	\$ N		+ / - []%
4	\$ O		+ / - []%

Step 3

Plan Future Direction

- Every month (or quarter), take a **critical look at the progress** you've made.
- **Decide upon future trends**, re-fix targets and make strategic alterations.
- **Be bold. Don't hesitate to experiment.** After all, if it doesn't work, you can revert to the previous model!

PROCESS PLANNING

- **Every masterpiece** needs a blueprint

Introduction to Planning

Now that you have your strategic objectives clear, the next step is to plan the process of e-zine publication. There are six broad areas to be covered:

- **layout and design** of your e-zine
- **content** for your e-zine
- **formatting** your e-zine
- **archiving** past e-zine issues
- planning your e-zine's **website**
- **distributing** your e-zine

4. Planning Your E-Zine **Layout** And **Design**

The debate and controversy around this topic would fill a volume. But **some basic principles remain constant.**

Most e-zines have a consistent layout, including

- [Header](#)
 - [Table of Contents](#)
 - [Content](#)
 - [Footer](#)
 - [Advertisements](#)
-

4.1 The **Header**

The header is the portion of your e-zine that appears '**above the fold**' - on the first screen of the e-mail reader when the message is opened.

There are no hard-and-fast rules in e-zine publishing. Most often, an e-zine header will include:

- **Name of the e-zine**
- **Issue number**
- **Date**
- **Short descriptive sentence, slogan, tag-line or jingle**
- **Web site URL**

The header briefly **introduces your e-zine** to your reader and offers a link to click on and visit your website. It also makes that **crucial first impression**, and carries your **brand image** to the subscriber.

You can **number each edition** of your e-zine sequentially, beginning with 'Issue 1' for the first, and continuing with Issues 2, 3, 4 and so on.

Or you can adopt the **system that print journals use**, the "Volume No. : Issue No. " convention. A 'volume' includes all issues in a year (or even half-year). So

the 1st issue of January would be 'Volume 1: Issue 1', the next would be 'Volume 1: Issue 2', and next year, January's first edition would be 'Volume 2: Issue 1'....

When you mention your **publication date**, remember you are writing for an **international audience**. To avoid confusion, use words for months e.g. 12 January 2000, or 12 Jan 2000.

In your website URL, **don't forget to add the 'http://' prefix**; it'll allow readers to click directly on the link in many e-mail programs.



E - Z - L - Your Plan

Prepare a Header

[Write down the name of your e-zine e.g. My E-zine]

[Issue No. e.g. Issue No. 1]

[Date e.g. 12 Jan. 2000]

[Jingle e.g. "My E-zine for Your Entertainment"]

[Website URL e.g. <http://www.your-ezine.com>]



4.2 Table of **Contents**

Providing a table of contents shows your concern for the reader; it allows them to **see what you offer at a glance**.

Divide your content into **distinct categories** - articles, news, reviews and so on - and list them in the Table of Contents.

For short or frequent e-zines, the Table can be brief and simply list the content areas. For lengthier ones, you could beef up the Table of Contents by including a short description of each item.



E - Z - L - Your Plan

Step 1

Write down the titles of pieces of your content that can be grouped together, and choose a title for each chunk of content

Step 2

Prepare a **Table of Contents** using these examples for guidance

Example: Short Table of Contents

-
- Introduction
 - Feature Article
 - Subscription Information
 - Feedback
-

Example: Longer Table of Contents

+ Introduction:

- Greetings on the New Year
- What Else is New
- Trivia Fun

+ Feature Article:

- "TRIVIA MANIA" - a look at the sweeping interest in trivia across the Web

+ Subscription Information:

- Tell your friends to sign up for a free copy
- + Feedback:
- "Largest Lake in the Hills"
 - "I love this newsletter"
 - "How long is a mile?"

4.3 The Content

The most important part of your e-zine – indeed, the reason people would want to read it – is its **content**. The topic is so important that a [separate section of this book](#) is devoted to it. In it you'll learn about the [different types of content](#) you can use in an e-zine, [methods to find them](#) and other [general tips](#),

4.4 The Footer

Loosely defined, the footer is **information placed at the end of your content**, and is uniform for all issues of your e-zine.

A footer can provide any, or all, of the following details:

- [Subscription Information](#)
- [Archive Information](#)
- [Feedback Request](#)
- [Copyright Notices](#)
- [ISSN](#)
- [Legal Disclaimers](#)
- [Author / Editor / Company information](#)
- [Other Announcements](#)

Having a standard footer helps present a consistent, professional image and saves valuable time in re-writing the same information for each issue.

4.4.1 **Subscription Information**

Some e-zine authors prefer to position this valuable information in the header or near the top. The choice is yours.

The information that **MUST** be provided includes:

- **How can a new reader sign up for your e-zine?** Ideally, a website URL and an e-mail address must be available.
- **How can a current subscriber discontinue receiving your e-zine ?** Again, a combination of web URL and e-mail address is desirable.
- If you have had (or are likely to have) problems with your subscription management, it is wise to list a **trouble-shooting e-mail address** for people to write to in case of problems.

In addition, you might include a **brief description of your e-zine** and a link (website or e-mail address) to allow a reader to **recommend your e-zine to a friend**.

E - Z - L - Your Plan

Step 1

Prepare a standard template for subscribe / un-subscribe information.

Here is a sample:

If you received this issue from a friend and wish to sign-up for your own subscription, here's how.

To Subscribe you may:

Visit our website:

<http://www.yoursitename-sub.com>

Or send e-mail to:
<mailto:subscribe-e-mail@ddress.here>

To Un-subscribe you may visit our website at:
<http://www.yoursitename-unsub.com>

Or send e-mail to:
<mailto:un-subscribe-e-mail@ddress.here>

In case you have any problems with these services, please
e-mail me at <mailto:troubleshooting@youraddress.com>

NOTE: Adding the word "mailto:" before the e-mail address makes it a clickable link in many e-mail programs. All that your reader needs to do is click on the link, and an e-mail program will open with a new message addressed to you.

Step 2

Draft a short description of your e-zine, not exceeding 50 words. Add it to the end or beginning of the subscription information.

Step 3

If you desire, **add a 'Recommend It' link** or other material you'd like readers to see.



4.4.2 Archive Information

New subscribers might find useful information in your **past issues**. By **putting them into an archive** and allowing readers to access them, you can **add value to your e-zine**.

An **e-zine archive** may be created in the form of a **website**, or be available by **auto-responder e-mail**. [More about this in another section.](#)



E - Z - L - Your Plan

With a simple statement, include a link to the archives.

You may read previous issues of this e-zine on our website at
<http://archives.yoursite.com>

4.4.3 **Feedback Request**

Asking for reader comments and opinion is a valuable way to improve your e-zine's quality. Include a **request for feedback in every issue.**

E - Z - L - Your Plan

Invite reader comments by stating

**I would love to hear your opinions, comments
and suggestions about this newsletter.**

Please write to me at your-e-mail@ddress.here

4.4.4 **Copyright Notices**

These range from elaborate, legally phrased copyright announcements to very basic short statements. At a bare minimum, a **copyright notice should mention**

- the **word** 'Copyright', or **symbol** © or (C)
 - the **owner** of the copyright (author, editor or company name)
 - the **year of publication** of the content
 - if other rights (like reprint, syndication) are copyrighted, it is safe to include the phrase '**All Rights Reserved**'
-

E - Z - L - Your Plan

Prepare a standard copyright notice.

Copyright <your name>, 2000. All Rights Reserved

Or you can **go overboard !**



4.4.5 ISSN

An ISSN – or **International Standard Serial Number** – is a unique eight digit number that identifies your serial electronic publication. Including it in every issue of your e-zine can help **add credibility to your publication**.



4.4.6 Disclaimer

If your e-zine contains information that potentially might land you in trouble, it makes sense to include a disclaimer. Again, like a copyright notice, this might be highly technical and worded in legalese, or could be a friendly note refusing to be held for consequences for acting on information your e-zine provides. One of my favourites is:

"All possible disclaimers apply - if you use this, you are on your own :) "

For the really paranoid among you, it might be best to consult your lawyers! The others may forge ahead.



E - Z - L - Your Plan

Step 1: Decide if you need a disclaimer

Step 2: Draft one, or consult your lawyer



4.4.7 Contact Information

In the impersonal medium of e-mail and the Internet, trust is fast becoming a scarce commodity. An e-zine uniquely enables you to **establish a trusting relationship with your reader**.

But how can you trust a cluster of electrons ?

That is why **contact information** is very important. It puts your reader in touch with you and your company.

Every issue of your e-zine should contain **some information about yourself**. At the very minimum, include

- your **name**
- your **e-mail address**
- your **website URL**

To develop greater trust with readers, you can add more personal information like

- your **street address**
- your **business address**
- your **telephone number (or mobile, or pager)**
- your **fax number**

But beware!

Revealing such personal information in public could have potential hazards. A lot depends upon your level of comfort with revealing private data.



E - Z - L - Your Plan

Step 1

Prepare a **Contact Information** section

- [Editor's Name]
- [Editor's E-mail address]
- [E-zine's Website URL]
- [Name, e-mail of any authors who contribute regular columns]

Step 2

Optional. If you wish, add the following to the above.

- [Your Street Address]
- [Your Business Address]
- [Your phone number]
- [Your Fax number]
- [Any other data]



4.4.8 **Other** Announcements

You may add **any other relevant information** in this section. Some examples are:

- **invite authors** to contribute articles
- **request readers** to pass on a copy of your e-zine to friends
- "Coming in the next issue" - a **pre-view** of what readers can expect soon
- **Acknowledge contributors**, hosting services or sources



4.5 **Advertisements**

If you decide that you want to include advertisements in your e-zine, there are a few more things to finalize:

- **How many ads** should you run per issue ?

Difficult question. There is no definite answer. As a very rough guide, try and see that the advertisements do not exceed 30% of your e-zine's content. Less is better.

- **Will you have a separate section for ads ?**

Until recently, many e-zines had a 'Classified Ads' section - just like newspapers. All the ads were placed together in this section. Recently, there has been some concern about the efficacy of such ads.

- **In what position will your ads run ?**

Conventionally, ads have been placed in three locations in e-zines:

- **TOP position** - at the top, just under the title. Grabs the reader's eye, gets the most attention, hence justifies high pricing.
- **MIDDLE position** - within the body of the e-zine, often at the end of a section of content like a feature article
- **BOTTOM position** - at or near the very end of the e-zine

- **IDENTIFYING ADS TO PREVENT CONFUSION WITH CONTENT**

Unless it is clearly identified as an ad, there is a risk that advertisements may be misinterpreted as content. It is advisable to **separate the ad from surrounding content** by using empty space and some text-bars, and adding a caption that says "**SPONSORED BY**", or "**ADVERTISEMENT**", or "**Support Our Sponsor**".

- **What kind of ads will you accept ?**

As a general rule, your readers will not object if you advertise products or services **of interest to them**. Try and limit advertising to such areas.

- **BE CONSISTENT**

Once you decide upon the number and position of the ads, **do not change often**. Your readers will come to expect a certain amount of advertising as a necessary evil. Respect their tolerance by not exceeding this limit.



E - Z - L - Your Plan

Step 1

1. Decide how many ads per issue you will accept	
a. One ad per issue	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. 2 to 3 ads per issue	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. 3 to 10 ads per issue	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. more than 10 ads per issue – You'd better have a good reason for this 😊	<input type="checkbox"/>

Step 2

2. Define the position of these ads		
a. TOP ad slot	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
b. MIDDLE ad slot	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
c. BOTTOM ad slot	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
d. CLASSIFIED ads	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Step 3

What kind of advertisers will you accept?

- Ads for []
- Ads for []
- Ads for []
- Ads for []

Step 4

What kinds of ads will you **NOT** accept ?

- Adult content []
- MLM, Marketing []
- Other - specify []

5. Your E-Zine's Content

It doesn't matter

- **what** your e-zine is about
- or how **well formatted** it is
- or that you **administer it excellently**
- or that **you are the top expert** in your area
- or that **you have a subscriber list** of many thousands

The **Most Important** Thing About Your E-Zine Is Its **CONTENT**

With every single issue, you'll be judged harshly by your readers, many of them receiving your e-zine for the first time. And impressing them with **exceptionally good content** is the only trick in your bag, the only weapon in your armoury to keep your reader happy, satisfied and wanting more.

In e-zine publishing **CONTENT IS KING**. If you provide content of a consistently superior quality, your e-zine will be a success.



5.1 What **forms** of **content** should you use ?

It's your e-zine. You know best - or should - what your audience wants. Here are some suggestions:

- [editorials](#)
- [feature articles](#)
- [news clips or stories](#)
- [aggregating the best content](#)
- [reviews](#)
- [announcements](#)
- [website updates](#)
- [interviews](#)
- [interactive features](#) - polls, feedback, discussion groups, forums, chat

Let's see how you can weave them into your own e-zine.

5.1.1 Editorials

As an e-zine publisher, **you are perceived as an 'expert' in your field**. Over time, your readers will begin **to trust your opinions and views on issues**.

You can leverage that into e-zine content by writing editorials. **Use an editorial to share your viewpoint on a topical - maybe controversial - issue.**

There is an added benefit to this strategy. **Readers will respond** to your message, either endorse it or oppose it. Their feedback can be incorporated into a follow up article in a future issue!

You could also use the editorial space **to establish personal contact with your readers**. Write a short chatty piece, maybe about what's been happening in your life lately, or introduce a new author or resource.

5.1.2 Feature Articles

A feature article is the most common - and one of the best - forms of content in most e-zines.

Here are some tips for writing good feature articles for your e-zine:

- Articles shouldn't be **too lengthy**. While there aren't any rules, it is perhaps safe to keep feature articles below 1200 words long.
- Articles should be **relevant** to the topic of your e-zine.
- Articles should **educate or inform**. Try and limit the message of a piece to one or two new ideas.
- Articles should be **original**. The originality should preferably extend to the idea, the concept behind the write-up as well. Don't simply rehash an article you've read elsewhere. By publishing an article that hasn't been already featured in many other newsletters, you enhance the value of your own e-zine. This however means that you must

- **Write your own features:** It's hard work, but rewarding. And it assumes you can write reasonably well.
- **Get someone to write articles specifically for you:** It's difficult to arrange, but the long-term benefits are enormous. You could offer to
 - a. **pay guest authors** for their article or
 - b. **contribute an article of your own to their publication in return.** This way, you are adding value to readers of your e-zine by providing them with another (your guest author's) point of view, without doing any 'extra' work yourself. A fringe benefit is that you might hook some new subscribers from your guest's list!
- Articles should be **exclusive**. If someone else writes for you, make sure the same article won't be submitted to dozens of other e-zines. Benefits from publishing exclusive content include
 - a. **syndication opportunities** in other publications, online and off
 - b. no risk of readers leaving you to **find your content elsewhere**

Reprint articles **only if you have to**. Even then, **add value** by putting your own 'spin' on the content - maybe introduce the subject, or comment on the author's opinions or conclusions.

Caution - do NOT 'edit' the original article without the author's permission. Avoid articles that have been reprinted many times before in other publications.

5.1.3 News **C**lips and Stories

Staying informed of the latest developments and happenings in areas of interest is becoming increasingly difficult and time consuming. Your e-zine can offer a solution to this dilemma by **providing timely news on topics that might be of interest to your readers**.

You may create a separate section to deal with industry news. Or you might devote an entire issue to news updates. By this you are adding value to your subscriber, and ensuring that your e-zine is read every time.

There are many ways of presenting news:

- as a **feature article**

- a **short news clips**, with a link to the full story on a website
- as **news stories**, where each item is explained at length

Whichever way you choose to present the news, make sure to **stamp it with your own personality**. Make it interesting, personal, chatty, fun, unique, or all of these - **with your style of writing, or by adding your point of view**.

As with feature articles, news clips should be

- **relevant**
- **useful** to your reader
- **timely**. Remember, old news is no news!



5.1.4 Aggregating the **best** content

Finding, tracking and regularly visiting informative websites on a specific topic is difficult and time-intensive. Many readers will appreciate a **listing of the best resources on a subject**. Website picks are therefore a valuable content idea for your e-zine.

As an expert on your topic, you can **evaluate sites and other resources** (e-zines, directories, books, offline publications) for the best. And then list them, along with your rating and opinion of the site, with a link to the site itself.

Many excellent and very large e-zines follow this success model - you can too.



5.1.5 **Reviews**

Here's your chance to help your readers by guiding them to the very best - books, websites, music or other products and services. You, the expert, tell them what is good and what isn't.

Why should you present reviews?

A guiding principle in writing reviews is that the **reader's need comes first**. In a review, you share something that will be of interest and benefit to them.

If you read a great book, or surf into a wonderful website, then tell your e-zine subscribers about it in a review.

How to write a review?

Some tips:

- **Be brief.** Provide contact / ordering information for those who want to know more.
- **Be relevant.** Limit your reviews to the topic and subject of your e-zine.
- **Be selective.** Set high standards for the products you review. A review in your e-zine should become an honour people will vie for!
- **Be analytical.** Tell your reader specifically what is good or bad about the thing you review.
- **Don't go overboard.** Restrain your impulse to offer extremes of praise and criticism.
- **Be balanced.** Point out the good and bad aspects with equal emphasis.
- **Offer Recommendations.** At the end, say what you think about it. Is it good ? Or bad ? Should your reader buy the product, visit the website, order the service ? Tell them.

What should you review?

Anything - as long as it is relevant to the topic of your e-zine, and of interest to your reader. Here are some ideas:

- **Books** : Surely there are books on your e-zine's topic. If you've read any good ones (or even bad ones), or an author/publisher sent you a copy to review, you could **write about it for your e-zine.**
- **Websites** : If you **have a favourite website, or run across one that is useful, entertaining or informative**, review it for your e-zine. You could analyse it in depth, highlight it's strengths and weakness, focus on the benefits it offers. Your readers will love you for this. Indeed there are some great e-zines made up entirely of website reviews !
- **Products and services** can also be grist for your mill. Just remember to stay within the guidelines - **relevant and useful to your reader.**



5.1.6 Announcements

Some e-zines are vehicles to **distribute information** on updates to your website, and recent happenings in your company and its products, or in your speciality.

- Has your company **done something new** and innovative?
- Have you developed **an improved version of your product**?
- Are you privy to **insider information in your industry**?
- Do you follow the **rumours and gossip in your field**?
- Do you track **swings and developments** closely?

If you do, announce them on your e-zine.



5.1.7 Website Updates

An e-zine is an excellent way to get readers to visit your website again, and thereby create "stickiness" to your site.

Why should you encourage repeat visits?

There are two major benefits from running a "sticky" website:

- if you **sell advertising space** on your site, the repeat visitors would generate more page views, and therefore additional revenue
- if a visitor comes to your site again and again, and becomes loyal to your service, he or she is **more likely than others to respond to offers** on your site, and to buy products from you.

An e-zine is the best way to gently remind your reader to come back to your website again.

What to write about?

- Tell them about a new article you've written.
- Or a new tool or game or photograph or poll.
- Offer special discounts.
- Make seasonal offers.
- Distribute freebies.
- Do anything....

... but just get them to **come back** to your site. Again. **And again.**

5.1.8 Interviews

Publishing an interview with an expert is exciting, valuable content. And it is easy to conduct one via e-mail.

Here's how it works:

Step 1

Identify your expert

Step 2

Learn more about your expert - special interests, experience, achievements, status in field, etc. This allows you to modify your interview to suit the individual.

Step 3

Decide upon **a topic** for the interview. Prepare a **set of questions** you'd like to ask.

Step 4

Contact your expert with an interview request. Most experts would be happy to participate in your interview. For those who seem hesitant, mentioning the exposure they would get from your publication is enough to get them to agree!

Step 5

E-mail a copy of your questions to the expert and review the reply.

Make editorial changes suitable for your readership. Rearrange the questions so that there is a smooth flow of thoughts.

By intelligently interspersing additional queries and comments, you can make it appear as if the interview was carried out in person!

Ask additional questions, or for clarification when necessary.

Step 6

Get approval from your expert for **the final version** of the interview.

Step 7

PUBLISH !

5.1.9 Interactive Features

What sets apart the Internet and e-mail from traditional media (television, radio, newspaper and magazines) is **the potential for "two-way" communication, or reader interactivity**. And this is even easier with an e-zine.

Why should you interact with readers?

Easy. To **improve** your e-zine's quality.

- You can **establish** closer, more personal relationships with subscribers
- You can **find out about their preferences**, likes and dislikes
- You can **listen to their complaints and suggestions**
- You can **request their feedback** on your performance
- You can **collect valuable demographic data** on your audience

AND.... you can **get fresh content to use in your e-zine!**

All of this allows you to make improvements, additions and enhance the value and utility of your e-zine to your reader.

Leveraging Interactivity for your E-zine

By employing interactive tools, you can generate content to use in later issues of your e-zine. There are many different ways to do this. Here are a few ideas:

5.1.10 Polls

Survey your readers. Ask a question. Request a vote on an issue or topic.

About what?

- **an article in the e-zine** - "Did you find this week's feature helpful ?"
- **current events** - "Will you vote for the GOP in the next election ?"
- **a controversial issue** - "Do you believe in religion in schools ?"
- **user preferences** - "Would you like to receive this e-zine every week ?"

- **demographic data** - "Do you have young children ?"

Be **imaginative** and **creative**.

Some guidelines:

- **Be brief**. Ask no more than 7 or 8 questions
 - **Offer choices**. Frame the questions to have a YES/NO option
 - **Provide an incentive to reply**. A discount, a freebie, a trial membership
 - **Compile the results and announce them** to the list. Your readers will enjoy hearing about what their peers think and feel about these issues.
 - Show that **you are acting on the feedback** received
-

5.1.11 **Feedback**

Reader feedback is extremely valuable - **if you listen to it with a mind open to change, and act on it.**

Criticism can stimulate you to improve standards. Questions and requests can indicate areas where you must provide content that helps your reader.

A **good feedback loop between e-zine publisher and subscriber** is worth a lot - probably as much as the trans-continental cables that wire the world together!

How can you get feedback from your reader?

- Make it obvious that you **welcome feedback**.
- In every issue, **ask them to write back** with their comments, opinions and suggestions for improvement.
- **Provide an e-mail address to write to**, or send them the URL for a web-based feedback form they can submit.

How do you turn feedback into content?

Use your creativity to come up with new ideas. Here are some suggestions:

- Write a **feature article that answers the questions** your reader asked

- Print out the **questions or comments your reader sent in, and answer them**. Take care to request their permission to use their words. Most often, they'll agree - especially when you promise them a moment in the spotlight by mentioning their name, e-mail id or website URL in your post!
 - Act upon the suggestions readers make; then **write about these changes**
-

5.1.12 **Discussion Lists**

Building a discussion group around your e-zine is another way to promote interactivity while generating usable content in the process. While feedback is a one-to-one communication, **a discussion group permits many-to-many interaction**, since every e-mail sent to the group is distributed to each member.

Here's what you can do:

- **Create a discussion group** using one of the free or pay-services.
- **Announce it on your e-zine** and invite your subscribers to participate.

Readers could debate controversial articles and news stories, discuss other issues related to your topic and share their views and opinions with other readers.

The **material generated** in such lively debate could again be used as the seed to **grow content** for your e-zine.

5.1.13 **Forums**

One more method of growing an online community around your e-zine and promoting interactivity is a **Forum or Bulletin Board**.

An electronic bulletin board is a website where a visitor can read messages posted by others, and respond by writing another message on the board. This reply is also displayed for others to read, producing a growing list of discussions on related topics.

After a reasonable period of time, **the messages under a particular topic could be encapsulated into a feature article** or other form of content on your e-zine.

5.1.14 **Chat Rooms**

Real-time online chat is a fantastic interactive tool - but with unavoidable limitations.

Chat rooms **allow personal and intimate interaction** with your readers. However, they can become serious time-wasters unless you are wary and well organized. Other inconveniences include time zone differences across countries, dependence on Java technology and problems with scheduling times when many participants are available.

Chat events permit the creation of innovative pieces of content like

- **interviews** with participants, especially experts and celebrities
- **discussions** on featured topics and issues
- **workshops and seminars** for e-zine readers

Transcripts of chat sessions - edited for continuity and flow of the conversation
- **make for exciting content.**

5.2 Where To **Find** Content?

There are four options:

- [Create it yourself](#)
- [Invite contributions](#)
- [Hire content providers](#)
- [Syndicate or licence content from others](#)

5.2.1 Creating Your **Own** Content

Writing **content** for an e-zine **isn't** e-z!

If you have a lot of experience in your speciality, and your writing skills are excellent, content creation will be a simple matter of sitting at your computer and banging away at the keys for a few minutes.

If, however, you aren't wired that way, putting out each issue of your e-zine will feel like having a tooth pulled - **without anaesthetic !**

But don't despair. There's something for everyone on the Net :-)

Before you decide to create your own content, here are some things to think about:

- **Do you have the **expertise**?**

Are you really an expert? Can you write valuable, reliable, interesting content regularly? Most of your readers won't know much about your topic (hey, that's why they signed up for a subscription). But there will be the occasional expert. You can't fool your readers with pretence. Don't even try to.

- **Do you have the **skills**?**

Can you write well? You might understand General Relativity. But the way you write about it might confuse Einstein himself!

- **Do you have the **time**?**

Writing original content of a high quality can take time. A lot of time. And it is an ongoing thing, week after week, issue after issue. Can you do it?

E - Z - L - Your Plan

- Are you knowledgeable about your topic? YES [] NO []
 - Can you write well? YES [] NO []
 - Do you have the time to spare? YES [] NO []
-

5.2.2 Invite Contributions

If writing your own content is not suitable, don't despair. **There are many people around who will be happy to write for your e-zine.** (But read the section about "Originality of Content")

Why would they do it?

Because it projects **them** as experts, and gives them exposure and access to your readers. Most often, all that these authors ask in return is **a by-line** - a short 3 to 5 line description of the author and his/her business at the end of the article.

So if you don't want to (or cannot) create your own content, ask others to help.

Include a short note in your e-zine saying that articles from other authors are welcome. Then wade through the submissions to choose the best to present to your audience.

(Note: Review the section about [Reprinting Articles](#))

E - Z - L - Your Plan

Do you want to invite contributions from other authors? YES [] NO []

What content will you accept?

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------|--------|
| • Feature articles | YES [] | NO [] |
| • Editorials | YES [] | NO [] |
| • News Stories | YES [] | NO [] |
| • Announcements | YES [] | NO [] |
| • Press Releases | YES [] | NO [] |

Do you plan to offer payment for articles? YES [] NO []

Will you accept regular contributions? YES [] NO []

Specifications for contributions

Number of words - not exceeding [] words

By-line

- Author Name
- Qualifications
- E-mail id / Website URL
- Short Description - not more than [] lines/words

Terms and conditions of submission

- **Exclusive** (not to be published anywhere else) []
- **Semi-exclusive** (can be published only on author's site/e-zine) []
- **Non-Exclusive** (may be published elsewhere) []

5.2.3 Hire Content Providers

And then, there's **the lazy - and rich - man's way out!** Pay someone else to create content for you.

Content providers come in different forms.

- **Freelance authors** are writers-on-contract, who will submit articles on a pay-per-word/article basis.
- **Full time writers and content providers** are employees who will provide professional-quality material for a regular salary. Hiring a professional team to put out your e-zine is an option if you (or your business) need the benefits of running an e-zine, but don't have the time or necessary technical skills in-house. While this could turn out to be expensive, it might still be cheaper than trying to acquire the skills on your own.

5.2.4 Syndicate or **Licence** Content

Syndication is an interesting model to get quality-content from experts at reasonable cost. **Content created by an individual or company is displayed on other partner websites or e-zines, in return for a payment** (flat fee or percentage of revenue generated) or sometimes even for just exposure on the partner's website.

Licensing content for a specified period, on payment of a licensing fee, is another option.

For your e-zine, you might consider syndicating or licensing content from:

- **News services** that provide brief updates and news flashes on a variety of topics
 - **Content aggregators** who collate information on a topic from around the Web
 - **Magazines and Newspapers**
 - Content-rich niche **portal sites**
 - **Other e-zines** on your topic
-

5.3 Some **General** Tips For E-Zine Content

5.3.1 Develop Your E-zine's **Personality**

The best e-zines are the ones that provide **extremely high quality content consistently over a long period**. They are highly informative or entertaining, formatted attractively and published regularly.

But is that enough?

Probably not.

In an impersonal medium like the Internet, an e-zine that has **personality** is a rare, but refreshing change. Editors of such e-zines give their publications a uniqueness that sets them apart from the pack.

How do they do this?

By imbuing their e-zines with a part of their own personality. E-zines of high calibre convey to the reader the values, ideals, ambitions and attitudes of its editor. After reading a few issues, readers come to believe they know you, the editor, personally; they identify with you, trust you, respect you.

But how can you reach this exalted status?

I'm not sure. It isn't easy. All I can say is

"Be Yourself - ALWAYS"

Those who like you, your thoughts and views, your expertise and knowledge, your style and writing, will gravitate towards you. Those who don't will leave.

Here are some ideas:

- **Be Passionate**. Write as you feel, not as you want to be seen or perceived
- It's ok to **be opinionated** or state your point of view
- Always give your reader **top priority**
- Stick by your **values and ethics** – always

- **Be emotional**, not rigidly logical

In the final analysis, **if you love what you write about, it will show in your work**. And your readers will feel it too.



5.3.2 Choose Your **Writing** Style

The writing style you adopt for your e-zine will depend upon

- your **topic**
- the nature of your **audience**
- your talent and **preferences**
- the **purpose** of publishing your e-zine

A formal, impersonal, grammatical style would be ideal for some e-zines. But a chatty, friendly, write-as-you-talk style will be a perfect fit for others. **There aren't any rules - use what works for you.**

But as always, be consistent. Don't switch styles often - unless your readers ask you to.



5.3.3 Writing **for** E-zines

Reading online, on a computer screen, differs in many ways from the way people read print publications. Most **skim through an article** rather than read it line after line.

By breaking up content into small chunks, and the generous use of white space between them, you can make your e-zine look neat, uncluttered, and readable.

Shorter sentences, using catch words and phrases that attract attention, avoiding long hard words with many syllables, getting to the point right away, using subtitles to set off each paragraph - all make it more likely that your subscribers will also be readers!



5.3.4 Teasers or **Full Length** Articles ?

You could publish entire feature articles or news stories in your e-zine. Or you may choose to write **a short summary, a 'teaser', that entices the reader to a website to read the full story.**

There are pros and cons to each strategy. With full articles, your e-zine might become too long; but readers benefit since they can read the article offline (important where users are charged for Internet access per minute of online time), and are spared the inconvenience of visiting another website.

Using 'teasers' to draw readers to a website helps by

- providing a **richer user experience** with the bells-and-whistles that web pages allow
- generating **extra advertising revenues** from banner ads on the site
- offering a chance to **promote other products** to the reader
- helping **track the number of subscribers** who read your article (subscriber/reader ratio)

The downside is that your reader may not swallow your bait and visit the website. Some might even resent being asked to take that extra step to view your content and un-subscribe. If you archive past editions, managing the links in your previous issues with every website update can become a daunting task.



5.3.5 Spelling and **Grammar**

Recent versions of most word-processing (and even e-mail) programs come with built-in spell-and-grammar checking tools. But e-zines still have mistakes in them.

Your reader will judge you on many factors. Spelling/grammar is just one of them - but an important one.

While it isn't the 'be-all end-all' of good online publishing, reasonable care to ensure correct spelling and grammar is essential if you are to establish a serious image.

A few mistakes might (and will) slip through the cracks! Your readers will probably accept this. But if it happens very often, some would sign-off.

Remember, writing is but a means to an end - which is **'communicating with your reader'**. Connecting with your audience. Retaining their interest. Entertaining them. Educating them. Engaging them.

So that they trust you, like you, continue to read your publication.

If your e-zine enlivens, instructs, or effectively motivates, it's a success. If it doesn't spawn a rash of "Un-subscribe me" requests from readers, it is a winner.

In the final analysis, you are the best judge - because you know your audience.

Write the way they like to read! Or they will vote your e-zine out - with their index finger on the DELETE key



5.3.6 Be **Bold** - Experiment

Publishing an e-zine can be an interesting voyage of self-discovery. **Be adventurous. Try out new ideas. Imitate models you find interesting. Keep innovating.**

And monitor response to each change. Did your readers like it? If they did, keep it. If not, experiment again.

Most e-zines grow by such trial-and-error methods. The winners are those who identify successful models and develop them, while ruthlessly eliminating any that fail.

An open mind to ideas and suggestions, and a willingness to adapt to change, is perhaps the best skill you can develop as an e-zine editor.

6. Planning Your E-Zine's Format

If there's one issue that gives e-zine publishers sleepless nights and prematurely grey hair, it's the way in which **different e-mail programs display the same message.**

Web designers are familiar with this problem. Different web browsers like Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape Communicator interpret the same web page code in slightly different ways. For this reason, a web page that looks 'cool' in one might look plain and unattractive in another and frankly ugly in a third !

And there are only a few major web browsers in existence.

Not so e-mail programs - there is a virtual glut of them. And each has its own quirks and preferences.

Then how does a publisher ensure that an e-zine looks good in all of them?

It is NOT impossible to create a professional looking well-formatted aesthetically attractive e-publication; but it needs patience and some preliminary work.

An alternative is to distribute your e-zine in [HTML fashion](#), where much more control is possible over the format and design of your e-zine. But that's another kettle of fish!

The bug-bears with text-only e-zines

Most of the features of an e-zine that might vary from one e-mail program (or 'client') to another fall under one of these broad categories:

- [line length](#)
- [hyperlinks or URLs](#)
- [file size](#)
- [special formatting tags](#)
- [e-mail links](#)
- [fonts](#)
- [publisher gaffes](#)
- [formatting aesthetics](#)
- [HTML vs ASCII](#)

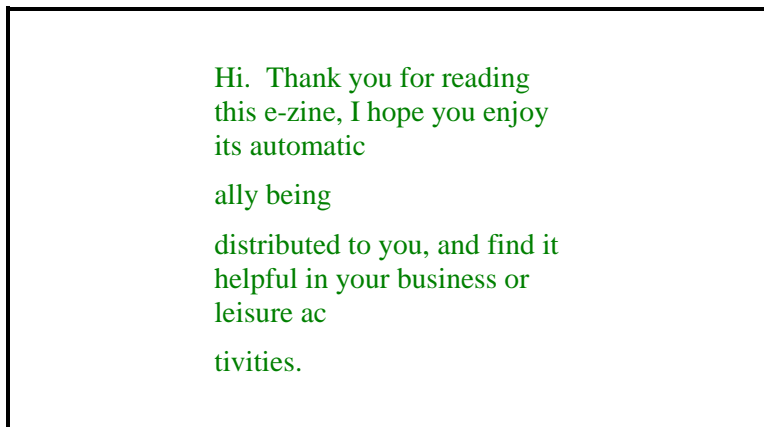
6.1 Line Length

If you type out an e-mail in a text editor like Notepad in one long line, and then cut-and-paste this message into an e-mail and send it to your friends, each will see a different layout depending on their e-mail program.

This is because each program is designed to **'break lines'** (decide to stop and move the text to the next line) at a specified length.

Most programs break a line **after 70 characters**, including blank spaces. What this means to you, the publisher, is that **all the text after the 70th character will automatically be pushed to the next line.**

This may cause your e-zine to look awkward. For example, here's how a paragraph may look on your reader's screen:



Hi. Thank you for reading
this e-zine, I hope you enjoy
its automatic
ally being
distributed to you, and find it
helpful in your business or
leisure ac
tivities.

And that isn't all. Some e-mail programs break lines **after just 65 characters** ! I've even heard of a few that break every 60 characters, but this is very uncommon.

E - Z - L - Your Plan

To get around this constraint, you need to adopt a simple rule. **Limit the length of each line of your e-zine to 65 characters - maximum.**

This does not mean writing in very short sentences. Instead, once you reach 65 characters, **you insert a 'hard return' or 'line break'**. This is done simply by pressing the **ENTER** key on your keyboard.

Now when your e-zine is displayed on the reader's screen, **each line breaks exactly where you want it to - after 65 characters** - instead of where the program's design tells it to. You have now secured better control over the appearance of your e-zine across various e-mail programs.

6.2 Hyperlinks or **URLs**

Many times, you will want to tell your readers to visit a website to learn more about a topic or to see something exciting. You can do this by typing in the **web address or URL** (short for Uniform Resource Locator) into your e-zine.

For instance, here's what you might write:

To learn more about black holes,
visit <http://www.blackhole.com>

Most of the newer e-mail programs are so designed that they can **automatically convert such URLs into web-like hyperlinks** that your reader can simply 'click on' to visit the website.

This is infinitely more convenient to readers, since the only other alternative is to manually type the URL into the web browser's navigation bar or cut-and-paste it into the browser's search bar.

E - Z - L - Your Plan

There are a few formatting tricks to ensure that the URL you mention shows up correctly on these e-mail programs.

1. **Set apart** the URL from surrounding text by

a. putting it alone on a separate line or

b. by enclosing it within right-angle brackets - < and >

e.g. <http://www.x.com>

2. **Make the URL a clickable hyperlink** by always using the http:// prefix. e.g. instead of "www.x.com", always write "http://www.x.com"

6.2.1 The AOL conundrum

AOL is an Internet behemoth. And as you'll soon learn, **it is also a stumbling block for e-zine publishers**. This is because AOL's e-mail client is **unique and quirky in its interpretation of text**. One of its temperamental areas is in rendering URLs.

In contrast to other e-mail programs, AOL's e-mail client requires that URLs be presented as HTML coded text in order to be seen as clickable hyperlinks. Here is how to do this. Instead of

<http://www.x.com>

you will now write

** CLICK HERE **

On an AOL e-mail client, this will appear as

CLICK HERE

and when the reader clicks on the text, (s)he will be taken to the URL.

The [** TEXTLINK **] format is the same as web designers use while coding a web page.

6.2.2 The Troublesome Long URL

Sometimes a URL you want to include in your e-zine will **be longer than 65 characters**. This can become a problem, since most e-mail programs will break it into two lines - and this means it is no longer 'clickable'.

In most cases, you may choose to simply tell your readers that the entire URL is one long line and ask them to cut-and-paste it into their browsers.

Another workaround which is a little more complicated is to set up a REDIRECT URL on your e-zine's website and link to it from your e-zine.

In brief, what happens is:

- your reader clicks on the link to the e-zine's website from your e-zine
- the e-zine's web page is coded in such a way that it **automatically redirects** the visitor to the actual web page with the long URL

Since this **happens automatically**, the visitor is often **unaware that (s)he is being transported to another site !**

6.3 File Size

Fortunately most e-mail clients do not impose size limits on messages - though a very long e-zine will be much less likely to be read!

But of course, AOL has to be unique even here. **When the total file size of your exceeds 24 KB, AOL's e-mail client will convert it to an e-mail attachment.**

Note: In computer jargon, a byte is a unit to measure computer data. **One KB or kilo-byte** is made up of 1000 bytes. Most e-mail programs will mention the file size in the **'Properties' section** of the message.

Often this isn't a problem - except that some readers prefer not to receive attachments with their e-mail.

E - Z - L - Your Plan

Try and limit file size to less than 20 KB. There is a lot you can say in less than 20 KB !

6.4 Special Formatting Tags

Some e-zine publishers prefer to compose their text in a favourite word processing program like MS-Word. This is perfectly alright as long as you understand an important issue.

Many, if not all, word processing programs offer the use of special formatting tags - like curly quotation marks, ellipses and copyright symbols.

When messages containing such special formatted material is viewed in an e-mail client, it might appear as bizarre pieces of text. For instance, your message may look like this:

```
Hi=20
Thank you for reading this issue of=20
>4 my e0zine. I $really$ appreciate=20
>4 your support.
```

This is because different e-mail clients interpret special formatting tags differently.

E - Z - L - Your Plan

As always there is a workaround for such problems.

1. Try and **avoid using word processing programs for creating e-zine content.** The lowly and humble NOTEPAD that is bundled with all Windows software is an ideal program to compose e-zines.

2. Always **e-mail a copy** of the completed e-zine to yourself first. This helps in two ways:

- you can **see how your e-zine will appear** on an e-mail client like yours (if possible, view it in many different client programs)
- you can **check for special formatting tags**. To do this, use the SHOW HEADER option of your e-mail program to view the entire message header. Look for a line that says:

```
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1      OR  
  
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 8bit                  OR  
  
X-MIME-Autoconverted: from Quoted-printable to 8bit by [sender-  
domain.com]
```

All of these are **danger signals** - it means your text contained some special tags or characters which your e-mail client has converted to standard text.

Instead, you should be happy if you see

```
charset="us-ascii"      AND  
  
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit (or not see this line at all)
```

6.5 E-mail Links

If you are asking your readers for feedback, you could say:

"Please write to me at editor@your-ezine.com"

Just as with URLs, it makes it convenient for your reader to send you this feedback from your e-zine if all e-mail links are **'clickable'**.

This is simple to do. Just insert a **"mailto:"** before the e-mail address. Here's how it looks:

"Please write to me at <mailto:drmani@vsnl.com>"

In most programs, the e-mail address now becomes a clickable hyperlink.

But not in AOL. To help your readers with AOL accounts, you need to be a bit more elaborate and enclose the e-mail address within HTML tags.

Here's how it's done:

` Please write to me `

This is how it will look in an AOL e-mail client:

Please write to me

The words will be a hyperlink on which the reader clicks to send e-mail. The [` TEXTLINK `] format is the same web designers use in creating web pages.



6.6 Fonts

In plain text e-zines, there aren't many fonts you can use. But when your reader opens your e-zine in an e-mail program, there are many different fonts available.

Broadly, there are two kinds of fonts:

- **mono-space font** - where each and every character takes up the same space
- **variable space font** - where characters have different and uneven spacing



E - Z - L - Your Plan

Use **mono-space** fonts to design your e-zine.

Why ?

Because **mono-space content** looks **better when viewed** using an e-mail program **with variable fonts**, rather **than the converse**.

6.7 Publisher Gaffes

You have learnt of the vagaries your reader's e-mail programs impose on your e-zine.

But there is an equally important limitation - the e-mail program **that you use** to send out your e-zine !

Here are two steps you can take to avoid formatting gaffes on your end.

1. Send your e-zine out in **PLAIN TEXT FORMAT** only. Other options that your program might offer include rich text, HTML or both plain text and HTML.
 2. **Do not** send out your e-zine with **quoted-printable encoding**.
 3. Ensure that your e-mail program **does not wrap lines shorter than 65 characters**. This can happen when your own program is set to break lines at less than 65 characters.
-

6.7.1 But **How Do You Check On These Matters?**

Many e-mail programs have a set of default settings. Some of them might be configured to send rich text or other forms of text, or to use encoding, or to wrap lines at a specific number of characters.

To find out what your e-mail's default settings are and how to make changes to them, take a look at your user's manual.

If you use **Eudora, Microsoft Outlook Express or Pegasus Mail**, here's how to do it:

1. **Eudora** - Click on "Tools" and then "Options". Click on "Sending Mail", and uncheck "May use quoted-printable". Then select "Styled Text" and check "Send plain text only". Click 'OK' to save your changes.

2. **Microsoft Outlook Express** - Click on "Tools" and then "Options". Choose the "Send" tab and under Mail Sending Format, select "Plain Text". Then click the "Plain Text Settings" box and in the Encode Text Using option, select "None". Adjust the settings of the "Automatically Wrap Text At" option to any number greater than 65. Click "OK" to save your settings.

3. **Pegasus Mail** - Click on "Tools", then "Options". Click the "Sending Mail" tab. Then select the "Always remove formatting" radio-button. Then click on the "Message Settings" tab. Change the "Message Width" option to be greater than 65. Click "OK" to have your changes preserved.

In most cases, these modifications should remove any formatting glitches from your end.

6.8 The **Aesthetics** of E-zine Formatting

The issues discussed above will help prevent your e-zine looking ugly or awkward.

But that isn't enough.

You want your e-zine to look BEAUTIFUL, don't you ?!

There are some basic principles to remember in putting together an e-zine that'll **knock your readers' eyes out.**

6.8.1 Be **Consistent**

Your e-zine should have a **distinct visual look-and-feel** that impresses itself into your reader's mind. It therefore follows that this appearance must remain more or less constant. Think of it like your morning newspaper - you like it a certain way, and won't appreciate it changing oh-so-often.

6.8.2 Write for **your** audience.

Most e-zine readers - as Web surfers - skim through the material. Your e-zine's layout should **make it easy for them to catch the significant portions of content.**

6.8.3 Use white space **judiciously**

Plain white space **sets apart distinct chunks of text** and makes them more easily readable.

6.8.4 Text **decorations** add flavour

There are many ways of using simple ASCII text, arranged in different ways, to create attractive patterns and dividers. ASCII art and signature blocks can add visual appeal to your e-zine. It may be something as simple as this:

=====

or much more elaborate like this:

~@~#~@~#<*>~@~#~@~#<*>~@~#~@~#<*>

6.8.5 Be **Flexible**

If many readers complain about formatting, be prepared to make alterations.

E - Z - L - Your Plan

Design a template or design container into which you will insert content for your e-zine every issue.

Create a set of pleasing ASCII graphic dividers, decorations or signature files.

6.9 E-zine **Format** Dilemma – Plain Text or **HTML**?

< Disclaimer: I have never personally sent out HTML formatted versions of my e-zine, and all the information presented here is culled from the knowledge and experience of other experts in the field of e-zine publishing. >

The newer generation of e-mail clients are capable of displaying e-mail with special formatting. Interactive e-mail with graphics, animation, even music and video, is becoming increasingly popular.

6.9.1 Should you **use** HTML ?

So, as an e-zine publisher, should you opt to include bells and whistles in your publication ? Should you send out a HTML formatted version of your e-zine or stick to plain vanilla text ?

A lot depends on your **topic and audience.**

Don't do it just because **you can. Ask yourself whether **you should**.**

6.9.2 What are the **advantages** in an HTML e-zine ?

1. **Appearance:** Since colour, graphics and other features usually seen on a website can be added to HTML e-mail, your e-zine will look nicer.
 2. **Tracking:** By using special code tracking, it is possible to accurately determine how many times your e-zine was seen by readers.
 3. **Advertising:** Advertisers like HTML e-mail because banner advertisements can be displayed on them. Tracking response to these ads is also more reliable.
 4. **Branding:** With HTML, a uniform visual impression including logos, colours and banners can be extended across the e-zine and its website.
-

6.9.3 **Drawbacks**

On the contrary, there are many serious disadvantages to putting out a HTML formatted version of your e-zine:

1. You need to **know at least basic HTML**, or rely entirely on HTML editors which aren't optimal in coding
 2. **File sizes can become very large**, primarily from bloated code inserted by HTML editors
 3. A whole new slew of **viewer incompatibility issues** needs to be identified and addressed
 4. **Bandwidth limitations** will inconvenience those with slow connections to the Internet
-

E - Z - L - Your Plan

If you are considering developing an HTML e-zine, there are some issues you would do well to resolve at the beginning.

- Are you going to have **ONLY a HTML version, or a text version as well?**

- If you already have a text e-zine, **do you want to change over to HTML** or start a second HTML version in addition?
 - Are you clear about the **reasons** you want to run a HTML e-zine? What **specific benefits** do you hope to derive from it?
 - Do you have a **knowledge of basic HTML**, or are you willing to learn?
 - Do you have the **necessary software** for editing HTML, creating and modifying graphics and tracking page views and banners?
 - Does your list distribution software/service **support HTML e-zines**?
-

6.9.4 Getting **Started** – a **HTML** primer

HTML - Hypertext Markup Language - is the format where codes are included within brackets (tags) and inserted into a text document. When this document is viewed in a web browser or HTML compatible e-mail client, the text appears with special formatting.

HTML e-zines are more powerful than simple 'rich-text' format e-zines because they can not only format the text elements but also add special features like background colours, images, tables and even scripts (Javascript, DHTML).

Many of the newer e-mail clients support HTML formatted messages, but interpret them with slight differences. Microsoft Outlook Express, Outlook 2000, Netscape Messenger and Communicator, Eudora 4.x and Pegasus Mail can open HTML messages.

6.9.5 Can you **send** HTML formatted e-mail?

All HTML messages are sent as text. When the **recipient's e-mail client interprets the special codes (tags)**, it displays the message in all its glory.

First, verify that your list distribution program/service can send HTML e-mail. **Most of the services offer the option of choosing plain text or HTML formatting** - but remember to select the right option before sending out your e-zine.

In the header of the e-mail you send out, check whether this line occurs:

Content-type: text/html; charset="us=ascii"

Instead, if it reads:

Content-type: text/plain; charset="us=ascii"

the reader's screen will **display the raw HTML code**, not the formatted message!

If you are using a list distribution service and are not sure if HTML is supported, request the documentation files and go through them. You cannot send HTML messages from AOL and CompuServe.



6.9.6 Software – Girding up for battle

Ask most expert web designers what their favourites HTML editor is, and you might be surprised - many prefer the lowly Notepad, the free accessory text editor that is bundled with Windows.

The reason is that most of the HTML editor programs **add redundant code**, bloating the size of a HTML file **by up to 6 or 7 times its original size !**

To prepare your HTML e-zine, do not use the editor that comes along with your e-mail program. They offer very limited formatting options, and bloat the code unnecessarily.

Instead use Notepad to create a template that you can later flesh out. Or use one of the dedicated WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) HTML editors like Microsoft's FrontPage 2000 or Macromedia's DreamWeaver.



6.9.7 Preparing the template

As with plain text e-zines, **creating a template can save hours** each time you send out an issue. If you don't know much about HTML coding, here is a step-by-step guide to creating a workable template:

- 1. Use a Word Processing program like MS-Word.** Create the **standard portions of your e-zine** - header, footer, menu bar, ad slots. Use coloured tables as design elements, with reversed text for headings. **Be consistent** in the

way headings and sub-headings appear (use h1, h2, h3 serially for lower level headings).

2. Once the outline is tweaked to perfection, click on EDIT, then SELECT ALL and copy-and-paste the text into a HTML WYSIWYG editor like FrontPage 2000. **Save this file as a FrontPage Template.**

If you are reasonably proficient in HTML, you might achieve the same result by preparing the template code in Notepad. The resulting code can be much smaller than with HTML editors.

In the future, when you are ready to publish the next issue, all you have to do is open this template and paste in the new content in the appropriate slot.



6.9.8 Publishing each issue

In a word processor like MS-Word, write your e-zine's content in HTML, using specific formatting tags for different text elements. Once it is ready, open up the template you've created in your WYSIWYG editor and move to the place where new content is to be inserted. Click on INSERT and then FILE and browse to the content file you just prepared.

Once this is done, save the file as a web page and you're done. Minor changes may be required to get the page looking just right.

The procedure is similar with Notepad. First you prepare the fresh issue in a separate file. Once it is modified to your satisfaction, open up the template you have ready and insert the new content at the right locations in the template. Save the new file as a web page and you're set.



6.9.9 Distributing your HTML e-zine

To distribute the e-zine from your own e-mail program, open a blank new message. Remember to **change the default settings so that the message will be formatted for HTML.**

Go to the file you just saved in your word processor. Click EDIT, then SELECT ALL. Copy the file to the clipboard. Then come back to the new e-mail message and paste the e-zine into it.

Send a copy of the e-zine to yourself first. See if it looks perfect. If not, modify it until it looks great. Then mail it out to your subscriber list.

If you use a list distribution service, you can **paste the final version directly into the mailing form on their server.** Take care to first ensure that the list service is **configured to send out HTML formatted mail.**

6.9.10 Problems with **HTML** e-zines

1. **File Size** Issues:

HTML e-zines as a rule are larger files than text only e-zines. While hand-coding with a text editor can trim the flab, a WYSIWYG editor can add size significantly. This becomes important when:

- many readers have slow Internet connections
- you pay for e-zine distribution by size or bandwidth used

You must make all efforts to see that the total file size (including graphics, if any) of your HTML e-zine does not exceed 20 KB. If you don't have the skills required, you could get an expert to look at your template and edit out the extra tags.

2. **Using Images:**

There are two ways to send HTML e-zines with graphics. The graphics could be **hosted on your website**, and the e-zine will have only a link back to the file. Alternatively, the picture could be **distributed along with the e-zine itself.**

Each has its pros and cons.

In the first instance, your reader won't see the graphics unless (s)he is connected to the Internet while viewing the e-zine. To add complexity, some users have their e-mail programs configured to **automatically dial and go online** when they come across such links in an e-mail message. This annoyance to the subscriber might result in a request to un-subscribe.

Attaching the picture to the e-zine however **increases its file size.** Worse, some e-mail clients **won't display the picture** properly.

So as far as possible, avoid using images and **try to use different background table colours to add visual appeal to your e-zine.** If absolutely necessary, it

may be **preferable to link back to images on your website** than include it in the message.

But please take care that the image actually exists on your website - there's nothing more annoying than a broken image link in an e-zine !

3. Ensuring **Maximum Compatibility**:

What happens when your nicely formatted HTML e-zine goes out to readers who have an e-mail client that doesn't support HTML ? **The raw HTML code appears like gibberish on their screen.**

By using HTML comment tags, you can offer a workaround. Insert a message to these readers, telling them what the problem is and offering a solution.

Here's an example:

```
<!--  
If you can see this line, it means your e-mail program does not  
support HTML formatted e-mail. You can still read this e-  
zine by visiting http://www.e-zine.com You might prefer to  
un-subscribe from this version of the e-zine and sign up for the  
non-HTML text version. To do this, visit http://www.e-  
zine.com/subscribe.htm  
  
Please ignore anything beyond this line - it is for HTML  
capable e-mail clients. Thank you.  
-->
```

By enclosing this text within comment tags - **<!-- and -->** - you have ensured this text is not visible to HTML capable clients. To the others, this text will be visible on the first screen of their e-mail client. It explains the problem and offers a workaround.

6.9.11 **Tips and Tricks**

Text Readability:

- Use **embedded style sheets** (CSS) rather than enclosing all text with FONT tags to control size, colour and font face.
 - Many HTML e-zines use small 10 pt. fonts (size=2). Readability studies suggest **using 12 pt. fonts** (size=3) is better.
 - For text, **Times New Roman is a much more readable font** than a sans-serif font like Arial.
 - **Avoid clutter.** Instead of crowding the user's screen with content, give your text some breathing space. Surround chunks of content with clean white space.
 - **Do not use text presented in two columns.** While this maybe suitable for print media, it makes on-screen reading difficult.
 - **Ensure contrast** between text and background colour.
-

6.9.12 **Things to Avoid**

- If you use tables, **don't use fixed width values.** As readers run different screen resolutions, they may be forced to scroll horizontally to read the e-zine.
 - **Avoid using frames, anchors and advanced scripting** (Javascript, DHTML) for the near future at least.
 - **Avoid using flashing or blinking text and animated graphics.**
 - There is a greater risk of putting out a badly formatted e-zine when you use HTML as there are more design elements to play around with. **Don't go overboard !**
-

6.9.13 **Unique Advantages with HTML e-mail**

- It is possible to **measure the number of times your e-zine was viewed** by placing a link from it to an "invisible" small image (1 X 1 pixel in size) on the website, and using a tracking program to count the number of times this image was accessed.

- Take advantage of HTML e-zines' **support for long URLs**.
- **Personalization and facilitation of e-commerce** are possible with HTML e-zines. When links are created by tapping into a database, the recipient can be identified as soon as (s)he clicks on the link in the e-zine. Such links can even be coded so that items are directly placed into a shopping cart. This saves time by partially completing the transaction even while the site loads !
- Tables allow a designer a lot of freedom in creating a **pleasing and eye-catching layout**. Keep testing until your e-zine looks good in different e-mail clients. Engage friends and family in the feedback process.



6.9.14 In the **final** analysis...

What should you be doing?

Publishing an HTML e-zine? Or a plain text one?

Today, when trends are changing, it seems wisest to **cater to both groups** by publishing **TWIN lists** - one HTML, the other plain text. That way you'll get the best of both worlds, and so will your readers.

From a standpoint of administrative convenience, it is best to host the two lists as distinct groups with different automated sign-up/sign-off addresses. Changing over between versions should be a choice your reader makes.

In the fullness of time, once e-mail clients more reliably become HTML compliant, an increasing percentage of your reading public will expect to see your e-zine in HTML format.

It is never too early to begin!



6.10 Planning A **Template** For Your E-Zine

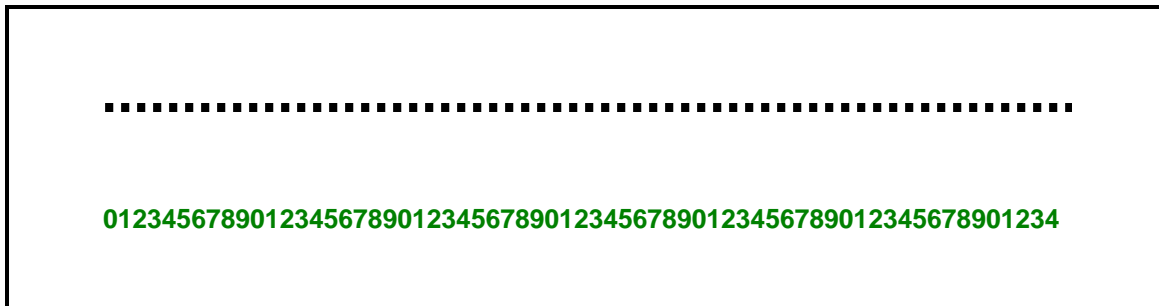
Keeping in mind the issues discussed in this section, you can put together a template - a sort of mould or cookie-cutter - for your e-zine, that you will use as a framework upon which each successive issue of your e-zine will be constructed.

Step 1

Setting Limits

Measure out the length of each line. Remember, a safe limit is **65 characters per line or less**. Use a spacer line to help you stay within this limit. Here's how you can create such a spacer.

Type out a special character 65 times or use digits to the same effect e.g.



Use this as a **visual guide** to limit line length. When the text approaches this limit, press ENTER.

With some imagination, you can even **embed this spacer into the design elements of your e-zine**.

Step 2

Choose or Create Design Elements

Create ASCII text patterns to act as dividers that separate distinct sections of your e-zine.

The divider may be a simple repeating sequence of keystrokes or it may be a more elaborate ASCII art 'graphic'



7 Planning Your E-Zine's Archives

Archiving is the process of organizing and making available all previous issues of your newsletter.

7.1 Why should you archive your e-zine's past issues ?

1. As the collection of your e-zine's issues grows, your archive will become a **valuable content resource** on your topic.
 2. It shows **concern for your reader**. For a variety of reasons, some of your subscribers might miss an issue. Archiving allows them to find it later.
 3. It **showcases your achievements** as publisher. A new potential subscriber can visit it to get a sample of the kind of content (s)he can expect from your e-zine.
 4. It can **boost your ranking** on search engines and directories and bring in more subscribers to your e-zine.
 5. It can become a **supplementary source of revenue**. [More on this later](#).
-

7.2 How to go about archiving your e-zine's past issues

The Y2K panic helped ensure the use of four-digit years (e.g.1999 instead of 99) in dates. This has helped eliminate some confusion. Still, there are as many different opinions of the best way to archive e-zines as there are publishers.

Broadly, there are **two ways** of archiving your e-zine - **on a website or by e-mail**.

7.2.1 Archiving on your e-zine's **website**

7.2.1.a **A Simple Solution**

Here is a solution that you may adopt or modify to suit your personal taste and choice.

When you place the HTML file for an issue of your e-zine into the archive, name it with the format: **YYYYMMDD.htm**

The YYYY stands for the year (in four digits), the MM for Month and the DD for the Day of the month.

The advantage of using this system over any alternative ones (like YYMMDD.htm or DDMMYYYYY.htm or MMDDYYYYY.htm) is that the **files will appear in chronological order** when you view them on your PC with Windows Explorer or through FTP or through a HTML editor interface.

This benefit may not be obvious as you start up. But pretty soon you'll have a substantial collection of HTML files, and sorting them by date can become time-consuming unless you stick to a system right from the day you start publishing.

7.2.1.b **More Elaborate Solution**

To give your readers a more enjoyable and valuable experience, you could use some other options than simply archiving your e-zine by "issue". Instead, you could **split up each issue into its component parts, and archive them separately as independent chunks of content.**

For instance, if every issue of your e-zine has a feature article, some news clips and a book review, you could split it up into three separate HTML files (or web pages) in the archive.

There are some distinct advantages to this approach.

- The components can be **grouped together by topic or other features**, and even placed in separate directories on your website.

- Each component **can be placed in a database** that can be made 'searchable' by keyword or author.
 - This categorized listing is much **easier to browse** for readers who visit your website in search for information on a specific topic.
-

7.2.2 Archiving by E-mail

Unless you enjoy responding to requests for past issues, **the process of e-mail based archiving is best automated**. This can be done by setting up e-mail auto-responders for each issue.

An auto-responder is a software program that sends out a previously specified message or file when it receives a request by e-mail. It is similar to Fax-on-demand in concept.

For each past issue of your e-zine, set up an auto-responder. e.g.

20000101@e-zine.com - for the January 1st 2000 issue

20000225@e-zine.com - for the February 25th 2000 issue

and so on.

When a reader sends e-mail to this address, a copy of the relevant past issue of your e-zine will be automatically sent to that reader by auto-responder e-mail.

8 Planning Your E-Zine's Website

It is not mandatory that your e-zine should have a website. But an e-mail newsletter and a website work together so nicely and reinforce each other so well that it is worth creating a website for it.

8.1 Why **should** you have a **website** for your e-zine ?

- A website **reinforces** the **brand name** and image of your e-zine
 - Many **new subscribers will sign up** after finding your website online
 - You can **archive all past issues** of your e-zine on a site
 - Readers can be encouraged **to interact with you** on the website
 - A website is **another revenue stream** for your e-zine content
-

8.2 What **should** you put on your **e-zine's** website ?

There are some things that are absolutely essential, others that are optional.

8.2.1 **Branding**

As you have learnt in the introductory section on **STRATEGIC THINKING**, the choice of a domain name for your e-zine's website is critical for establishing your brand identity.

Various design elements - the colour of your page, the text styles you use, the layout and graphics - **all combine to create an online ambience that is uniquely, specially YOU !**

Another important element of online branding is to **have an attractive logo for your e-zine**. A small graphic that is funny, exotic or catchy will help create a visual impression of your e-zine in your reader's mind.

This same logo can be displayed on other websites that link back to yours, further extending the brand of your e-zine (more about this in the [section on e-zine promotion](#)).



8.2.2 E-zine **sign-up** form

If **only for this reason**, setting up a website as a complement to your e-zine is **worth** the effort.

Many web surfers find information online from search engines like Alta Vista and web directories like Yahoo! If your website is listed on these resources, many new users will find you. Once they sign up to receive your e-zine, **you have a way to communicate with them repeatedly over time**.

It is therefore **very important** that you provide a **simple way** for these casual visitors to your website to **request a subscription** to your e-zine.

If you don't, poof! They're gone.

And you've lost them forever.

An e-zine sign up form is a simple HTML based box into which a user enters an e-mail address and clicks on a **SUBSCRIBE** button to be added to your list. The programming for a sign up form is not very complex, but you'll need to know basic HTML to do it yourself.

Later, in the discussion on e-zine distribution, you will learn about the free and paid-for professional services to send out your e-zine. These services will **generate the HTML code required, so all you need to do is cut-and-paste it into your web page**.

Some important tips about using an e-zine sign up form

- Provide a form on **EVERY** page of your website
- Display the form **near the top of the page**, so the user does not have to scroll down to see it
- Ask for the bare **minimum information** necessary for the subscription. In most cases, this will be a name and e-mail address

- Keep it as **simple** as possible
-

8.2.3 **Latest Issue**

Most e-zine websites offer a Web edition of their latest (or immediately previous) issue online. By placing the issue on a website, it is possible to create a **more visually appealing edition with HTML, graphics and colours**. It is also easier for readers to click on links of interest and directly access the website.

8.2.4 **Archives**

You have read the section about [archiving techniques](#). On your e-zine's website, **place a link to the archives from every page**. Offer the facility to search the archives for keywords or topics. Many search engine services are offered free on the Web and can be customized to fit your e-zine website.

8.2.5 **About your e-zine**

On a section of your website, provide a **basic background of your e-zine**. This should include your **e-zine's name, topic, a brief description of its content and purpose, publishing schedule, price (if any) and instructions to subscribe to your list**.

8.2.6 **Gaining trust with personal information**

The electronic world is impersonal and dreamlike. It takes a special effort from you to reach out and touch your reader on a human level. By putting a photograph of yourself on the e-zine website, and providing some personal details - a short bio, address, phone number, e-mail contact - you are breaking through this barrier and **creating a trusting relationship with your subscriber**.

8.2.7 Privacy Policy

There is much concern among web surfers today about violation of their personal privacy. This is why subscribers to your e-zine may be hesitant to reveal much information about themselves.

A clear and unambiguous privacy policy can go a long way in clearing up this mistrust. It doesn't have to be elaborate or complex. A simple sentence will do, like:

"We promise never to share or sell your e-mail address and other personal details"

While these are the essential components of your e-zine's website, there are some more options that can enhance the user experience to your website visitor.



8.2.8 Promote Interactivity

- **Run a short poll** about an article in your e-zine, or a controversial news item in your topic area.
- **Have a contest or trivia quiz**, and announce the results a week or month later.
- **Offer special seasonal discounts and freebies** from time to time.
- **Conduct online surveys** or include a feedback form to seek opinions from readers about your e-zine.

All of this encourages the reader to interact with you through the website.



8.2.9 'Submit an article'

If your e-zine will accept content submissions from others, offer a simple method for visitors to your website to send in their work for inclusion in your e-zine. A basic HTML form can serve this purpose.



8.2.10 'Refer a Friend' form

An interesting way to use your website to grow your e-zine is to offer a simple way for a visitor to **recommend the e-zine to a friend**. Many sites offer the scripts to create such forms for free. A visitor enters the e-mail address of a friend into the form and hits the **'Tell A Friend'** button. The script then automatically **generates an invitation to the friend to sign up for a subscription to your e-zine**.

8.2.11 Forums, Chat and Discussion Groups

To further encourage the development of a community around your e-zine, you could provide some more ways for your readers to meet and exchange thoughts and views. By setting up a **bulletin board, chat room or discussion group** on your website, you are providing additional value to your subscribers while developing potential streams of revenue for the e-zine.

8.2.12 Advertising and Sponsorship

Offering banner advertising and sponsorship on your e-zine's website is a well-proven revenue model for publishers. You'll learn more about this in [another section of this tutorial](#).

In addition to advertisements, the website can also provide **information for advertisers**. Devoting a section to a **media kit and ad rate card** and **offering payment options on the site itself** can help sell more of your advertising inventory off the website.

8.2.13 Other E-Commerce Opportunities

Once your e-zine has developed a sense of community online, and readers begin visiting your website regularly, it is easier to encourage them to buy things from the site. Trust has been created, and it will translate into greater opportunities for selling online.

8.2.14 Promotional toolkit

A section of the e-zine website can be set apart for **promoting your e-zine**. A logo and banner ad, along with snippets of HTML code that visitors can cut-and-paste into their sites, make it easy for anyone to recommend your e-zine on their web pages.

8.3 Should you do it **yourself**, or hire a **designer**?

There isn't a definite answer to this.

Hiring a designer to create your website has its pros and cons. If you are hard pressed for cash, or have the necessary HTML skills, you might go the 'do-it-yourself' route.

Some basic tenets to remember are:

- keep the website **simple and neat**
- **don't use many graphics** or heavy, cutting edge technology
- ensure the site **loads quickly**
- try and maintain a **professional appearance** that helps create trust

9. Choosing Your E-zine's **Hosting** Service

So your e-zine is ready; you're raring to go. **How do you send the e-zine to your readers?**

Three broad options present themselves:

- [Distribute it yourself using your own e-mail program](#)
- [Use one of the free services to host and send out your e-zine](#)
- [Order one of the professional list distribution software programs](#)

Let's take a deeper look at the benefits and drawbacks of each.

9.1 Doing it **all** by yourself

In your early days as e-zine publisher, it might be simple and even desirable to use this option. The process is simplicity itself. **Just collect all your subscriber e-mail addresses, cut and paste them into the BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) of your e-mail program and hit the SEND button.**

The benefits of this are:

- you have **total control** over each step of the process
- there **isn't any risk** of your subscriber list getting into wrong hands
- it is **inexpensive**, since most ISPs don't charge extra for sending out more e-mail
- it offers you a **wonderful learning experience** of all aspects of distributing an e-zine

On the other hand, there are many drawbacks.

- you must be **adept at the technicalities** of sending e-mail to a list and managing list administrative functions

- you need to **spend time and effort** on maintaining your e-zine subscriber list, adding new ones and removing those who wish to discontinue their membership
 - you need to have a **reliable, fast connection to the Internet**, and even then when your list grows large you may spend hours distributing your e-zine
 - **technical problems** may cause some readers to miss an issue, or receive multiple copies of your e-zine
 - your subscribers **don't have real-time confirmation** of subscribe/remove functions and have to wait until you handle them by hand
 - **some ISPs like AOL** will reject an e-mail message that has more than 25 addresses in the BCC field, presumably to avoid spamming.
-

9.2 Using one of the **free** e-zine distribution services

Just a year ago, using a free service would have been fraught with risks and inconvenience. Today things are much better.

There has been a shake-out in the myriad of companies offering free list distribution. After the dust has settled, only a handful of leading players are left of which the largest are:

- **ListBot** - <http://www.listbot.com/>
- **Topica** - <http://www.topica.com/>
- **OneList/EGroups** - <http://www.egroups.com/>

These services come in two varieties - **free, but advertising supported, and commercial paid-for.**

Each has some significant advantages:

- they are **free or inexpensive**
- they **automate most list administrative functions**
- they run on **powerful reliable servers** with high speed connections to the Internet
- they are **simple to set up and administer**, and offer web based administrative interfaces which allow you direct control over many aspects of your list

- they offer **several additional features** like promotion on their website, revenue sharing for ads, archiving of past issues, analysing reader demographics and more

The few drawbacks are:

- the presence of **advertisements for the service** on messages
- the **lack of human customer support**
- readers sometimes find it **difficult to un-subscribe** from the list

Even these minor annoyances can be overcome by switching over to a paid-for commercial account with these same services, which may cost between \$5 and \$5000 per month. For this price, you get **customer technical support, ad-free service and can customize your distribution preferences** to meet your unique needs.

Issues to analyse **before** making your choice:

1. **Quality** of customer support

- **Determine whether there is a customer support team**, and how promptly and effectively they respond to requests for assistance.
- **Try and locate other e-zine publishers who have used their service** and ask for opinions. Ask the service for some testimonials from users.
- Finally, **enquire about their security practices**. Who will have access to your e-zine database that contains e-mail addresses along with the demographic data you have gathered on subscribers?

2. **Level** of technology excellence

While an intuitive easy-to-use graphical web-based interface is standard with most e-zine delivery services, there are some other issues that you need to look into.

- **Option to download your subscriber list**. It is your list, and you must be provided unlimited access to it. Make it a habit to make backup copies of your list every two weeks or so.
- **Reporting on list statistics**. A periodic e-mail report of list activity, including number of new subscribers, un-subscribe requests and present list size can be helpful.
- **Ease of use for subscribers**. Find out if the joining and leaving procedures are easy and glitch-free.

- **Security levels.** Can anyone else post a message to your list ?
 - **Bounce management.** Determine the protocols used by the service to clean up your list of bounced mail. If they are too aggressive, you may lose subscribers faster than you gain them!
-

9.3 Buying **software** and running it on your **own** server

An option that should only be considered by the very **techno-savvy expert** is to order your own e-zine distribution software, install it and run it on your own server.

The software available spans a wide range from the free Majordomo to the powerful but expensive ones like Lyris.

Whichever option you finally select, make sure to first try it out for some time until you are comfortable. There is no simple best-solution, and only you can decide which is most suitable for your needs.

SWINGING IN TO ACTION

- **Shifting gears** from 'thinking' to 'doing'

Introducing the **Action** Plan

The time for strategic thinking and planning is now over. It is time to get your hands wet in the real world of e-zine publishing. Here's a step-by-step action plan to help you get right up to speed in an organized, methodical and practical way.

- [Prepare your e-zine's administrative messages](#)
- [Set up your e-mail auto-responders](#)
- [Set up your e-zine distribution service](#)
- [Put your subscribe/unsubscribe processes in place](#)
- [Set up your e-zine's website](#)
- [Get your e-zine's ISSN](#)
- [Send out your first issue](#)

10 Prepare Your E-Zine Administrative Messages

As you get ready to distribute your e-zine, you need to create a **mental image of the sequence of events a potential new subscriber will go through and how you will interact with this reader over time.**

The steps through which a potential subscriber may pass include:

- [learning about your e-zine](#)
 - [signing up for a subscription](#)
 - [receiving and reading their first issue](#)
 - [responding to it with comments, suggestions and feedback](#)
 - [opting to un-subscribe from your list](#)
-

10.1 Learning about your e-zine

In another section, you will learn about [promoting your e-zine in many ways](#). Someone might first come to hear about your e-zine from one of these promotional efforts and desire to learn more about it.

How can you help this reader by providing more information of your e-zine and ensure that (s)he becomes a regular subscriber ?

1. **On a section of your website, provide a basic background of your e-zine.** This should include your e-zine's name, topic, a brief description of its content and purpose, publishing schedule, price (if any) and instructions to subscribe to your list.
2. The same information provided on your website should also be **available by e-mail to anyone who requests it.** The message can be placed on an auto-responder, or you can send it manually to anyone who asks for it.
3. An administrative annoyance for e-zine publishers is the curious subscriber who signs on to your list, but soon discovers that it isn't quite what (s)he was

looking for - and un-subscribes ! To minimize the list management work involved with such a process, you may **offer a sample issue of your e-zine**.

New readers can request this sample issue to decide whether or not they really want to become regular subscribers. The sample issue might be put up on the website, or delivered by e-mail auto-responder, and **must include instructions for signing up for your e-zine**.

10.2 Signing up for a subscription

So your subscriber finds you and decides (s)he wants to be on your list.

Now **what** do you do?

Why, send out a welcome note, of course!

In your welcome note, here's what you can include:

- a short **greeting**
 - a brief description of your e-zine - name, topic, publishing schedule
 - details of the **e-zine's website**
 - **instructions on leaving** the list, if desired
 - optionally, a **sample issue** of your e-zine
 - **co-promotional messages and advertisements** (more on this in the [section on promoting your list with joint ventures and ad swaps](#))
-

10.3 Receiving and reading the **first** issue

As your list grows, there will always be someone among your readers who will be hearing from you for the first time. So it is always **good practice to greet your readers at the beginning of each issue**. You could say something like:

"Hi.

Welcome to another issue of <your e-zine's name here>.

Thank you for your continuing support and encouragement. I invite you to write back to me with comments, suggestions and feedback."

10.4 **Responding** with comments and feedback

One of the most important tasks of an e-zine publisher is to **respond to feedback**. Your reader spends valuable time writing to you with comments and opinions. **You are duty bound to acknowledge their effort and thank them for writing.**

It helps to have a **standard message** prepared for such instances. The message can be **modified for a specific reader.**

For instance, you could say:

"Hi.

Thank you very much for your recent e-mail in connection with the <your e-zine's name here> e-zine. I sincerely appreciate your taking the time and effort to let me know your opinion.

I value every subscriber to my e-zine and read all feedback you send me. It is e-mail like yours that makes it possible for me to continually improve this e-zine so that it delivers content that is more interesting, useful and entertaining to readers.

Please do continue to write in with comments."

10.5 Opting to **un-subscribe** from your list

Unfortunately, **there will always be people who wish to stop receiving your e-zine.**

It may be that they are no longer interested in your e-zine's subject, or that they can't spare the time to read it - or (dare I say it?) it isn't interesting enough!

You can gain a lot by knowing why someone chooses to un-subscribe from your e-zine. By sending them a short survey when they sign-off, you get valuable data on your e-zine's current performance and ideas for future improvement.

And if your reader is just changing jobs, or temporarily overwhelmed with e-mail and is un-subscribing for that reason, **you have a chance to invite them back once they have settled down and are back to speed.**

Here is what you can write:

"Hi.

I just received and processed your request to un-subscribe from <your e-zine's name here>.

I'm sorry to see you leave, and would greatly appreciate it if you would spare a moment to tell me why you decided to sign-off from this list.

And in the future, if you decide to subscribe again, I'll be happy to see you back. Just visit <your e-zine's website here> and follow the simple instructions to sign up.

Thank you for your feedback."

11 The Power Of Automation

When you are starting off with a small subscriber base, doing all of this administrative work - adding new subscribers, welcoming them, answering feedback, un-subscribing readers, sending out good-bye messages - is just a minor annoyance.

But when your list grows to a few thousand readers, the very same functions can become a serious time-waster.

But don't panic.

Most, if not all, of these functions can be automated.

If you distribute your e-zine using your own e-mail program, you'll need to configure the program's automatic filtering options to file messages depending on their nature (subscribe requests, feedback, unsub notes) and to automatically respond with a pre-written form letter.

When you use a free distribution service or your own professional program, these functions can be set on the website or in the program's interface.

11.1 Setting up your e-mail auto-responder

As you have learnt earlier, an e-mail auto-responder is a program, with a regular e-mail address, that sends out a pre-defined message automatically whenever any e-mail is sent to it.

11.2 How can you use e-mail auto-responders ?

E-mail auto-responders can be used to manage various aspects of an e-zine's administrative and promotional activities including:

- **giving information** about your e-zine and **instructions to sign up**
 - sending out a **welcome message** to new readers
 - **replying to user feedback**
 - **saying good-bye** to readers who choose to un-subscribe
 - **offering a sample issue** of your e-zine to prospective subscribers
 - **archiving past issues** of your e-zine
 - distributing your e-zine's **media kit and advertising rate card**
 - sharing HTML linking code and ads to **promote your e-zine**
 - **other promotional efforts**
-

11.3 What are the kinds of auto-responders?

Simple auto-responders are programmed to simply reply to any message with a specified response.

'Smart' or follow-up auto-responders are more complex, and can be configured to send out multiple responses at pre-determined intervals in response to a single trigger e-mail.

11.4 How to **set up** your e-mail auto-responders ?

1. **Sign up for an auto-responder.** Some web hosting services offer unlimited auto-responders as part of the package; others don't. If your service does, it has the added advantage of branding - the auto-responder address will be the same as your e-zine's domain URL. If it doesn't, you can register for the many free services or order one of the commercial auto-responder services.

2. **Decide upon the name of the auto-responder.** Try and use short, descriptive names. Your welcome message could be "**welcome@your-e-zine.com**" and your media kit could be "**mediakit@your-e-zine.com**"

3. Prepare the **text of the message to be sent by the auto-responder**. You may simply use the e-zine administrative messages you have already prepared for this. Cut-and-paste the text into the appropriate form fields.

4. **Modify the configuration to suit your needs** e.g. to send you daily stats of auto-responder usage, or to forward a copy of every request e-mail to you.

5. **Test the auto-responder**. Send e-mail to each auto-responder address and check the reply carefully. Specifically, you must note:

- **how long** it takes for the reply to reach you (it shouldn't be longer than a few minutes)
- whether the message is **formatted properly**
- if **all links** mentioned are functioning

12 Set Up Your E-Zine With A Hosting Service

Unless you have decided to try and host your e-zine by yourself on an existing e-mail program, you will have to **set it up on one of the free list hosting services**.

Indeed the services presently available are so powerful and efficient, **it may be a good choice to give them a trial** even if you're just getting started with your e-zine.

12.1 Register on the service

After choosing a list hosting service, you'll need to **fill in a brief registration form and choose a password** that will allow access to your e-zine list and administrative functions.

Almost instantly, you will be sent a **welcome message** by e-mail giving details of setting up your list and customizing its features to your needs. There are also online **HELP** pages to guide you step by step through the simple process.

12.2 Creating and customizing your e-zine list

On the online form, fill up the relevant data and follow the steps to create your e-zine's list.

Most services offer you facilities:

- to allow you to **screen new subscribers**, pre-approve them before adding them onto the list

- to **permit** distribution of messages **only from you to the readers**, or to have interactivity both ways (for an e-zine, you'll want to opt for one-way distribution)
- to **select** your e-zine's **SUBJECT line**
- to insert a **unique text tag** in the **SUBJECT line** of all outgoing messages
- to choose to send out your e-zine in **ASCII text, HTML, or both versions**
- to **archive past issues automatically** on a sub-directory of the service's website
- to choose to **make your archives accessible only to list members or others as well**
- to **select a set of demographic details** you wish to collect from new subscribers

In addition, many also offer you promotional assistance including an opportunity to

- **transfer an existing list** of your e-zine's subscribers to the new one
- **invite new readers** to join up
- **include an announcement of your list** on their NEW LISTS page
- **run a short ad for your e-zine** on others hosted on their service, in return for a similar ad in yours
- some offer to **sell ad space on your e-zine** to advertisers



12.3 Take your list for a **test drive**

Once you have finalized the set-up process, **try it out**.

- Go to the SUBSCRIBE web page created for your e-zine and **try to sign up yourself**.
- **Try doing it by e-mail**.
- Then **send out a test issue** of your e-zine to yourself, in both ASCII and HTML format.
- **See if the message you sent is archived on the site**.
- **Try out the un-subscribe options** offered and see how easy it is to complete successfully.

If you are **dissatisfied** with any stage of the process, seek assistance from the customer service department or from the online FAQ.

If the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, consider changing hosts. **Rather than stick with a sub-optimal service, it is better to change hosts right away.**

13. Joining And **Leaving** Your E-Zine's List

The test of a pudding is in its eating.

The strength or weakness of your e-zine administration process is in the way it

- **signs up** new subscribers
- **removes readers** who desire to un-subscribe

You should ensure that the entire process is **effective, simple and quick (preferably automated)** leaving very little chance for error or delay. Otherwise your readers will react strongly.

Another essential feature is to **acknowledge all requests** - to subscribe or leave your list. This gives the reader instant feedback on the outcome of their action.

It may be done on the website itself, by directing new subscribers to a **THANK YOU page**. Or it may be done by sending out **an e-mail message** welcoming the new reader to your e-zine or saying good-bye.



13.1 Adding **subscribers** to your e-zine

A reader who wishes to receive your e-zine should be offered multiple options to sign up. The ones most often provided are:

- a **web based** sign-up form
- an **e-mail** address

With the first option, the visitor to your e-zine's website sees the sign up form. (S)he then enters an e-mail address in the box and clicks a button to join your list.

The second option is even simpler. A reader just sends a blank e-mail to a specified e-mail address (e.g. **subscribe@your-e-zine.com**) and is added to your list.

With both methods, the e-zine subscribing software program enters the reader's e-mail address into a database which it then accesses every time you send out an e-zine issue.

Other more innovative methods to ensure sign-ups are

- mentioning "Subscribe" instructions in all **off-line promotional efforts**
- embedding "Subscribe" links into **e-mail messages and forum posts**



13.2 **Strategies** for new subscriptions

Gone are the days when you could happily add e-mail addresses from your contact list into a database and send them a copy of your e-zine, offering to remove them from the list if they so wish.

This technique, called '**opt-out**' subscribing, is **one of the worst ways to grow your list** and drastically damages your credibility as an e-zine publisher.

Instead, offer your reader the choice to receive your e-zine.

In fact, offer it twice!

'Opt-In' subscribing is the process where a potential subscriber finds information about your e-zine and **requests to receive it**. It is much fairer than opt-out, where readers have your e-zine thrust into their inboxes.

The safest method - in terms of avoiding later spam accusations - is the '**Double Opt-In**' strategy.

Here, when a reader requests a subscription to your e-zine, (s)he is sent another e-mail **to which (s)he must reply to activate the subscription**. This avoids the not uncommon event of people using someone else's e-mail id to sign up for your e-zine.

On many of the e-zine distributing services, double opt-in is the method adopted by default.

If you are even more cautious, **save a copy of every subscription request** - by e-mail or from a website form. Later, you can show a subscriber their request if ever there should be an accusation of spamming. This strategy will also help you identify and track any forged subscription requests.

13.3 Gathering more **demographic** data on subscribers

Sometimes you may want to collect more data about your readers. This may be for:

- **advertisers on your e-zine** who like to know the characteristics of your readers
- **you, the publisher**, to help you tailor your content to suit your audience

Here are some tips on how to proceed:

1. Make it obvious **WHY you are gathering this data**.
2. **State your Privacy Policy** prominently and abide by it.
3. Collect **only the most important, usable information**.
4. Keep the demographic survey form **simple and short**.
5. Do this **only as a second stage**, after your reader has signed up by providing an e-mail address.
6. **Make it optional**, so this requirement doesn't scare away potential subscribers.
7. **Guarantee security** for the data collected.
8. **Automate the process** of filing away this data for future use.

13.4 Handling **un-subscribe** requests

Equally, if not more, important as subscribing new readers to your e-zine is removing those who request to be un-subscribed. It can become a time-consuming, painful and exasperating process at times.

Automating the process of un-subscribing can minimize this problem, but not eliminate it totally. Again, it helps to offer multiple options to subscribers:

- **Website** : where users enter their e-mail address into a box and click a button to be removed from your list.

- **E-mail address** : where users send an e-mail message to be removed from the database.

13.5 Warning Signs

There are many pitfalls you should be aware of as an e-zine publisher dealing with the "Un-subscribe me" problem.

1. **Readers who use multiple e-mail addresses.** They might sign up using one e-mail id, and request to un-subscribe with another! This happens more often than one might think possible.

There are several solutions, which may work in different situations:

- **Ask your reader if they have other e-mail addresses.** If they send you a list of them, you could remove the one that is in your database.
- **Scan the header of your reader's message.** Hidden among the seeming junk you might find a clue to other e-mail addresses your reader uses. Look for the e-mail id mentioned in the 'From:' or 'Received from:' fields, or in other sections of the header. To see how you can view the Header information in each message, consult the HELP section of your e-mail program.
- **Look for extra sub-domains under the reader's e-mail address.** For instance, if you can't find **dm@dm.com**, try and look for **dm@mail.dm.com** or **dm@smtp.dm.com**
- **Prevention is better than a cure.** Use an e-zine service or program that inserts the subscriber's e-mail address along with every message distributed, by performing a mail-merge. This way, the reader doesn't have to remember which address (s)he subscribed with.

2. **Database problems.** Maintenance work, or transient database problems can cause some errors in automated handling of un-subscribe requests. If a reader is having trouble getting off your list, your personal intervention becomes mandatory.

3. **Rude or lazy subscribers.** Some readers couldn't care less about how simple you make the un-subscribe process - they still won't bother to do it

themselves! **But a good e-zine publisher will not make that an excuse to ignore them.** Manually remove these readers from your list and you'll be free of headaches. Bad publicity spreads fast, and some vocal readers will kick up a fuss about not being taken off your list promptly.

13.6 Security Issues

Since all your subscriber e-mail addresses are stored in a single database, it is important to **protect this list from unauthorized access.**

Most commercial list hosts have stringent security firewalls installed to prevent malicious hackers gaining access to their member's lists. Running your e-zine from your own PC also minimizes the risk of miscreants stealing your list, unless you have a permanently active connection to the Internet.

But your credibility depends on your list's security. **How can you make sure your list is not misused?**

One technique is to '**seed**' your e-zine subscriber database with dummy e-mail addresses which you have registered, and monitor them. Here's how it works:

- **sign up for many free e-mail addresses**, using addresses that are totally unconnected to your name or your e-zine's title e.g. **abcd1234@yahoo.com, xyz098@excite.com, yen23x@about.com**
- use these free e-mail addresses to **subscribe to your e-zine**
- **monitor these addresses** periodically for e-mail *other than* your e-zine

If you find **other e-mail** delivered to these addresses, there are two possibilities:

- **Your free e-mail provider has made their list available to others** - in this event, only one of the 3 or 4 free addresses you have used to seed the list will receive junk e-mail.
 - **Your e-zine list has a security problem** - in this case, all the free e-mail addresses you used to seed your list will receive the same messages.
-

13.7 Tackling **Undeliverable** Or 'Bounced' E-Mail

Another unavoidable problem of distributing an e-zine is 'bounced' or undeliverable issues. There are several reasons for this:

- **incorrectly typed e-mail addresses** during sign up
- **closed/inactive** e-mail account
- **over-flowing e-mail inboxes** that exceed the size limitation
- **temporary network failure** of the e-mail server
- **other**

Deciding upon which of these e-mail addresses to remove from your list can be a difficult decision.

Bounces are classified into 'hard' and 'soft' bounces. Soft bounces are due to **temporary conditions** like network slow-downs or overfilled e-mail accounts. Hard bounces are due to **permanent issues** like closed accounts or wrong e-mail addresses.

Many of the automated services have advanced programming to help them distinguish between the two kinds, and remove only the hard bounces. If you manage administrative functions manually, this is another time waster that you'll need to tackle aggressively and systematically.

13.8 Some tips for **good** e-zine administration

- always keep in mind the fact that **list management is a never ending task**
- **automate** most, if not all, processes
- **intervene early** when readers have a problem with the system
- **be courteous and polite**, even if your reader is rude
- when you grow so big that you are spending hours every week managing your list, **delegate the job** to an employee or partner
- strive to always **provide excellent customer service** to subscribers

14 Set Up Your E-Zine's Website

In an earlier section, we have seen how a website adds value to your e-zine and seen how the website should be planned and what it should include. Now let's set the ball rolling and set-up your website.

14.1 Register your website domain

Earlier on in this tutorial, you have [learnt about selecting a domain name](#) for your e-zine. If you haven't already done so, now is the time to register this name.

Briefly, here is how this is done:

- visit one of the **domain name registrar services**
- **check to see** if the name of your choice is still available
- if it is, **register it online** by paying the applicable fees by credit card
- the registering service will require some **technical information** that will be supplied by your hosting service where your website will finally reside

If you would rather not bother with this inconvenience, many website hosting services will throw in a domain name registration free along with their package. You'll still however have to pay the applicable registration fees for the domain name.

A word of caution in case you choose this route is to **make sure the domain is registered under YOUR name, and not the web hosting service!**

14.2 Sign up with a website hosting service

Once your web pages are created, they will need to be displayed on the World Wide Web for others to see and access. A web hosting service will store your

pages on their servers and allow visitors to access them. For this service, they charge you a fee.

There are many technical details in selecting a web hosting service, and detailing them is beyond the scope of this work. However, there are many excellent sites that offer guidance and suggestions in selecting a web host.

14.3 **Create** your website

You may elect to **create your web pages by yourself or hire a web designer** to do it for you. Once the site is ready, you must transfer the pages to the server of your web host. Don't forget to include a **sign-up form to your e-zine** and feature it on every page of the site.

14.4 **Troubleshoot** your website

Once your website is hosted on a server, you should test it out on a web browser on the Internet. Ask your friends to have a look too. Specifically, check whether

- the pages load **quickly and completely**
- the layout and graphics look **attractive**
- the e-zine **sign up form is on every page**, and works correctly
- the other forms like "Tell a Friend" and interactive features like polls **work correctly**

It is also important to **check the page on different browsers**. Web pages that look great on one browser may not work on another. At the very least, check for compatibility with the top few browsers like Microsoft's Internet Explorer, Netscape's Communicator and AOL's browser.

14.5 **Announce** your website to the world!

Now that your e-zine's website is ready and functional, you can tell people about it.

Mention it in each issue of your e-zine; register it on the search engines and directories; promote it in every way you know.

In a [separate section of this work](#), you will learn a lot more about promoting your e-zine and its website.

15 Getting Your E-Zine's ISSN

ISSN stands for **International Standard Serial Number** and is the e-zine equivalent of ISBN for published books. It is an **eight-digit number** that provides a **unique identification** for your serial electronic publication.

ISSN is a standard form of reference used by libraries worldwide. The Library of Congress or its local equivalent will store back-issues of your e-zine in their archive for future reference.

The criteria to determine eligibility for an ISSN is **an intention to continue publishing indefinitely and be used in designated parts**. The publication must be divided into parts or issues with unique numerical designations by which individual issues may be identified and verified.

15.1 Why should you get an ISSN ?

- It **adds credibility** to your e-zine
- It **establishes the fact that you've been around for long**, and intend staying for longer
- It will **help you out in case of any copyright dispute** about material published in your e-zine
- It is **free**, and the application process is **simple** with an ISSN being allotted within a couple of weeks

15.2 Where can you apply for an ISSN?

In the **USA**, information about applying for an ISSN can be obtained from the **Library of Congress** at <http://lcweb.loc.gov/issn/>. The application form for e-zines can be found at <http://lcweb.loc.gov/issn/ISSN.html>

If you live in **Canada**, ISSN information can be requested from the website of the National Library of Canada at <http://nlc-bnc.ca/issn/e-issn.htm>

From **outside North America**, you may research the ISSN application process at <http://www.issn.org/>

16 Distributing Your E-zine

This is a short list of the important issues to keep in mind as you finally get down to sending out the first issue of your e-zine.

16.1 The Subject Line

If you have sent and received e-mail, you'll know that each message has a SUBJECT line in the header, below the FROM and TO fields. Often this is the first part of the e-mail that is seen by the recipient.

To a large extent, it also determines what (s)he does with it - read, file away or trash!

As you send out each issue of your e-zine, the SUBJECT line is therefore of critical importance. There are many different formats you can follow, each with its benefits and drawbacks.

1. **Use the E-zine Name, Issue and Date:** Make your e-zine's name the SUBJECT line of each message. For instance, you could use

Your E-zine Name - Issue 1, Jan.2000

The positive aspects of this technique are:

- it gives a **consistent image** of your publication, making it easily recognizable
- it **reinforces the brand** of your e-zine
- it allows your reader to **use e-mail program filters** to file your e-zine into a separate folder.

Incidentally, there is another way you can do this - use a constant text indicator that is unique to your e-zine - e.g. [XYZ] - as a prefix to the text in the SUBJECT line. Readers can then configure their e-mail program's filters to recognize this text indicator - [XYZ] - and sort that message into a specific folder.

The disadvantages are that this method is **boring and monotonous**, and might be perceived by some readers as indicating a lack of creativity and imagination.

2. **Use the E-Zine Name and Content:** In addition to your e-zine's name, you could add a short tag describing the content in that issue. For example, if the issue contains news stories, your SUBJECT line would read:

"Your E-zine Name - News Stories"

In addition to all the benefits listed above, **you give the reader an idea of the content of this issue.**

3. **Use a Catchy Tag:** With a short phrase or quote, highlight the most attractive feature of the issue's content. Here's a sample:

"Monkeys Don't Have Hearts - Only Kidneys!"

Adopting this method is **risky**.

While it increases the chance that your reader will be enticed by the headline you use, there is the possibility that (s)he will not associate this message with your e-zine and might consider it unsolicited commercial e-mail (UCE or 'spam').



16.2 **Editing** your e-zine

E-zine publishing is easy. That is why there are so many e-publications in existence.

E-zine editing is not easy. Which explains why the average e-zine would be rated as fair to poor, and why there are just a handful of excellent ones.

As an e-zine publisher and editor, **you alone are responsible for a myriad of tasks** that would be performed by distinct specialists in a print publishing house. Only if you pay attention to these details, you will be recognized as an exceptionally good e-zine publisher.

16.3 Proof Reading

Once your e-zine issue is ready, you must spend a few minutes to read it through - once or many times. You will **pick up obvious errors**, typos and formatting mistakes this way. You can also **prune and tighten sentences, edit out redundancy and harmonize the flow of content.**

The next step is to **get someone else to read through it.**

A friend, family member or even one of your subscribers might be willing to do it for you - an offer to give them a brief mention on your e-zine might help! The idea is that **an independent pair of eyeballs can pick up mistakes that you might oversee.**

16.4 Spell Checking

Most word processing programs come with fairly advanced spell checking tools. Cut-and-paste your e-zine's content into a word processor program and search for spelling mistakes and typos. Fix them.

Grammar checking tools are of limited utility, but can help you avoid gross mistakes and gaffes.

16.5 Formatting

The only way to check for formatting glitches is to **e-mail your e-zine to yourself and view it using different e-mail programs.**

At times, you may be surprised to find that what looked neat and attractive in one program looks tacky in another. Fine-tune your e-zine until it looks uniformly good in most e-mail clients.

16.6 Link Checking

Readers often get annoyed when an e-zine lists non-existent or 'broken' links to other websites.

To avoid this in your e-zine, first send each issue to yourself. **Click on (or cut-and-paste) every single link mentioned in it, including sponsor advertisements, and see that they are working.**

Small mistakes in spelling or coding links may make them break. Checking links for functionality avoids this problem.

17 Samples and Templates

Sample List **Administrative** Messages

Here are some sample messages that are used for my e-zine, THE HEART BEAT. Feel free to modify and use them for your e-zine too.

17.1 Request for **information** about your e-zine

Dr.Mani's THE HEART BEAT HEALTHZINE is a FREE monthly e-mail newsletter about Heart Disease and Health Promotion.

Each issue has

- feature articles
- book and website reviews
- first-person patient stories
- collections of select annotated internet links
- news updates

and much more. It's a valuable resource for anyone having heart disease or wanting to learn about preventing it.

Sign up for your own FREE subscription at <http://www.drmani.com/heartbeat/subscribe.htm>

You can read previous issues online at <http://www.drmani.com/e-zine/heartbeat.shtml> or request a sample issue by sending a blank e-mail message to <mailto:heartbeat@drmani.com>

I look forward to welcoming you as one of our 3000-plus subscribers.

Digitally yours,

Dr.MANI Sivasubramanian, M.D.

EDITOR - The Heart Beat Healthzine

<http://www.drmani.com/e-zine/heartbeat.shtml>

17.2 **Welcome** message to new subscribers to your e-zine

Thank you for subscribing to

Dr.Mani's THE HEART BEAT HEALTHZINE

the newsletter that HELPS GET YOUR HEART IN SHAPE. This free e-mail newsletter on heart disease and health will be delivered to your e-mail inbox once a week. I hope you enjoy it - even recommend it to your friends :)

I also invite you to submit your own personal stories as a patient with heart disease, for inclusion in the FIRST PERSON section of a future issue.

Please send any comments, suggestions or criticism about this e-zine by e-mail to editor@heartmine.com.

And please tell your friends and family about THE HEART BEAT. Better still, forward a copy to them. And tell them they too can sign up FOR FREE !

Digitally yours,

Dr.MANI Sivasubramanian, M.D.

EDITOR - The Heart Beat Healthzine
<http://www.drmani.com/e-zine/heartbeat.shtml>

P.S. Since you are interested in health matters, may I suggest a few other excellent FREE e-mail newsletters on health that you might also like to sign up for ?

--> E-zine 1
Subscribe instructions

--> E-zine 2
Subscribe instructions

--> E-zine 3
Subscribe instructions

17.3 Farewell message to readers who un-subscribe

Hello. I just received and processed your request to be removed from our subscriber list. I'm sorry you no longer wish to receive

Dr.Mani's THE HEART BEAT HEALTHZINE

If you have a few extra moments, please feel free to tell me why you decided to un-subscribe at this time, or let me know of any suggestions you might have for improving our e-zine. You can send me e-mail at editor@heartmine.com

And thank you for subscribing to The Heart Beat - we'll miss you :(

To re-join the list at any time, visit our website

<http://www.dencats.org/heart/register.htm>

or send an e-mail message to

<mailto:heartzine@listbot.com>

Digitally yours,

Dr.MANI Sivasubramanian, M.D.

EDITOR - The Heart Beat Healthzine
<http://www.drmani.com/e-zine/heartbeat.shtml>



18 Resources For Help

18.1 Auto-responders

Information about Auto-responders

<http://auto-responders.com/>

An excellent information bank on auto-responder related issues.

SendFree

<http://sendfree.com/>

Offers free auto-responders, and also has an innovative cross-promotional program where members accumulate credits towards advertising on other auto-responders in a targeted fashion.

MyReply

<http://www.myreply.com/>

Another free auto-responder service.

Aweber

<http://www.aweber.com/>

A commercial auto-responder service that is widely popular.

GetResponse

<http://www.getresponse.com/>

A commercial 'smart' follow-up auto-responder service which offers a free lite version and a relatively inexpensive pro package.

18.2 ASCII Art Software

E-mail Effects

<http://www.sigsoftware.com/>

A neat software program that lets you add ASCII art to e-mail. The attractive art work it adds to e-zines makes for greater visual appeal. This shareware program costs \$15 to register.

18.3 Basics of E-mail

A Beginner's Guide to Effective E-mail

<http://www.webfoot.com/advice/e-mail.top.html>

An excellent guide on e-mail basics - context, format, page layout, emoticons, status, formality, greetings and signatures. A useful tutorial to help make your e-zine better looking.

E-zine Etiquette

<http://list-etiquette.com/>

Online etiquette guidelines for e-zine publishers.

SWYM

<http://ronscheer.com/>

Ron Scheer's "Say What You Mean on the Web" e-zine educates subscribers about writing for the web.

18.4 Content Resources

E-Zinez News and Content Service

<http://www.e-zinez.com/members/service.htm>

A service for members of E-zinez.com, that provides a solution for e-zine editors looking for usable content.

Free E-zine Content

<http://www.e-zinearticles.com/>

A collection of articles offered free by authors in return for a short text box acknowledging their contribution.

Internet Wire

<http://internetwire.com/>

News stories covering technology, financial, and entertainment hubs.

News Bureau

<http://newsbureau.com/>

Press releases on breaking news covering almost all fields of interest.

Business Wire

<http://businesswire.com/>

Real time business news story headlines and links to full text articles.

E-mail List Press Release Services

<http://list-advertising.com/release-services>

A list of services that send you stories by e-mail in categories that you specify. No more hunting on the web for content ideas!

Press Release Network

<http://www.pressreleasenet.com/>

Will send you press releases on a variety of topics, distributed by e-mail.

PR News Wire

<http://prnewswire.com/>

Excellent press release archive, but only web based which means you'll have to visit their site to access them.

InfoBot

<http://www.infobot.net/>

Free re-printable content made available by auto-responder.



18.5 E-zine **archiving** services

E-Scribe

<http://escribe.com/>

eScribe is a free service for mailing list owners who wish to provide their subscribers with the ability to search and browse past messages via the web. It also offers free chat and bulletin board facilities

Disobey

<http://disobey.com/low/>

Another e-zine archive hosting service with categorized listings.

Geocrawler

<http://geocrawler.com/>

Has several e-zines archived on its site.

List Quest

<http://listquest.com/>

A mailing list archive conceived as a way to index the knowledge represented on various mailing lists.

18.6 Copyright

E-zine copyright

<http://www.sideroad.com/openroad/column29.html>

An article that looks at all aspects of copyright law as it pertains to e-zine publishers by Todd Kupers, e-zine guru.

Anti spam resource

<http://stopspam.sparklist.com/>

A collection of resources that explain UCE (unsolicited commercial e-mail a.k.a. spam) and the tools to fight it.

18.7 Free e-zine **distribution** services

Topica.com

<http://www.topica.com/>

New, but very powerful list management solution.

Read this review at

<http://list-tips.com/archives/list-resources/060199.html>

ONElist.com / eGroups.com

<http://www.onelist.com/>

<http://www.egroups.com/>

Recently, these two giants of the list distribution arena merged into a behemoth. The merger has gone without too many glitches, and the combined service has incorporated the best of each one.

Read these reviews of ONElist at

<http://list-tips.com/archives/list-resources/060399.html>

and eGroups at

<http://list-tips.com/archives/list-resources/060299.html>

ListBot.com

<http://www.listbot.com/>

A member of the LinkExchange network acquired by Microsoft, ListBot is a top notch list delivery service.

Read this review of Listbot at

<http://www.list-tips.com/archives/list-resources/060799.html>

Cool List

<http://www.coollist.com/>

A web based list creation and distribution tool for e-zine authors.

Milepost1

<http://www.milepost1.com/>

A mailing list service that allows you to start a new e-zine distribution list for free.



18.8 **Commercial** mailing list services

OakNet Publishing

<http://www.oaknetpublishing.com/>

Owner Phil Tanny has this to say: "If someone needs a good newsletter management system that comes with a real person attached, I think we'd be a one of the options they would like to consider."

ListHost

<http://www.listhost.net/>

"Unlike other list server companies, the folks behind the company come from a publishing background rather than a technical one. We really understand the issues that E-Zine publishers face and will work hard in helping you reach your own goals." says owner Sharon Tucci.

SparkLIST

<http://www.sparklist.com/>

SparkLIST specializes in high-speed e-mail list hosting and promotion. Hosting for e-zines is also provided, with a user friendly web interface.

E-ZINE-mail

<http://www.e-zine-mail.com/>

A complete web based solution to create an e-zine and a distribution list, manage it and offer other support needed to publish and distribute your e-zine without fuss.

18.9 List **distribution** software

Aureate Group Mail (Windows 9x/NT)

<http://www.group-mail.com/>

Allows you to set up 32,000 different groups with an unlimited number of recipients in each. You can verify e-mail addresses for validity before sending out your messages.

LISTSERV

<http://www.lsoft.com/ease-head.html>

Provides list managers and subscribers with several advanced functions including automated digests, flexible security levels, spam filters and automatic handling of bounced messages.

Lyris (Windows, UNIX)

<http://lyris.com/>

One of the first e-mail list servers to sport a graphic interface, Lyris is among the most powerful software programs available currently to manage large e-mail lists. All admin functions can be performed on the web browser or via e-mail.

List Software Solutions

<http://list-business.com/list-software/>

A comprehensive listing of the currently available free and fee-based list software solutions for e-zine publishers.

List Management Forum

<http://forums.list-universe.com/>

A virtual meeting place for e-zine publishers to discuss list management issues with other publishers.

MailKing

<http://www.mailking.com/>

Offers a database creating tool to add subscribers and a mail-merge while sending out personalized messages. It is a low-cost client side application, but doesn't handle sub/unsub automatically.

18.10 E-zine **Articles** of General Interest

Questions and Answers about Zines

<http://www.houseoffun.com/action/zines/ganda.html>

Making Zines for Dummies

<http://www.getgiddy.com/zine/dummy/>

Been There, Zine That

<http://www.salonmagazine.com/june97/media/media2970609.html>

History of the E-zine List

<http://www.art-bin.com/art/alabovitz.html>

Interview with John Labovitz

<http://www.foliomag.com/Magazines/Folio/Zines/19960126.htm>

18.11 General **resources** for e-zine publishers

List-Universe.com

<http://www.list-universe.com/>

An exceptionally good, extensive and regularly updated network of websites under the List Universe banner that is a veritable treasure trove for e-zine publishers and list owners. There are article archives, discussion groups, surveys, resources, directories and much more related to e-zine publishing and discussion list management. Managed by two great e-zine experts, Brian Alt and Christopher Knight.

The Book of Zines

<http://www.zinebook.com/>

Chip Rowe's extensive collection of information on e-zine publishing.

Anti Spam Resource

<http://stopspam.sparklist.com/>

Christopher Knight a.k.a. Sparky has put up a collection of resources that explain the concept of spam in no uncertain terms.

We Talk Zines

<http://www.e-zine-publishing.com/bbs/>

A discussion forum for e-zine publishers in threaded format.

E-ZineZ

<http://www.e-zinez.com/>

Kate Schulz has created a fascinating resource that is sure to help every budding e-zine publisher to learn the nuances of the trade. The E-zine builder holds the novice by hand and guides him through the steps of putting out an e-zine.

List-Tips

<http://www.list-tips.com/>

One of the best sites on the Web today about e-zine and discussion list creation and maintenance. Chris Knight and Brian Alt have developed this into one of the premier websites on just about any issue related to e-zine publishing.



18.12 E-Zine **Newsgroups**

[alt.e-zines](#)

[alt.zine](#)

[alt.zines](#)

[alt.etext](#)

<http://www.remarq.com/>

<http://www.deja.com/>



18.13 E-zine **management** scripts

Webreference

<http://www.webreference.com/scripts>

Andy King and his team have created a set of PERL scripts specifically for e-zine and list management. Included are a script to allow subscription to multiple e-zines, one to send out HTML e-mail and a random newsletter ad banner generator.

18.14 Editor Software

Super NOTE Tab Light

<http://www.download.com/>

A free text editor to help you design a text only e-zine.

Text Pad

<http://www.textpad.com/>

A shareware program which is a text editor with all the bells and whistles you ever dreamt of.

DreamWeaver

<http://www.macromedia.com/>

WYSIWYG HTML editor that writes elegant code that is free of the usual bloat. It also doesn't alter hand-written code modifications, quite unlike other programs like MS Front Page.

Microsoft FrontPage 2000

<http://www.microsoft.com>

WYSIWYG HTML editor that is extremely versatile and can be used to design and upload very complex web pages. Can be used to create HTML formatted versions of your e-zine. Code is rather bloated and sometimes redundant.

18.15 E-zine Books

Poor Richard's E-mail Publishing

<http://poorrichard.com/>

Author: Chris Pirillo

A wonderful primer on every aspect of publishing electronically on the Internet. The focus is on e-zine and discussion group management, and Pirillo does a great job in helping the novice publisher, while at the same time dropping a few nuggets that are sure to benefit even long-time expert e-publishers.

18.16 **Forthcoming Titles** in the E-zine Launch series

EzineLaunch – Part 2 : Promoting and Marketing Your E-zine

A sequel to this e-book, part 2 will focus entirely on methods to promote and market your e-zine and grow your readership quickly, steadily and also retain your newly acquired readers.

EzineLaunch – Part 3: Revenue Generation from Your E-zine

The last of this three part series, the focus of part 3 will be on generating revenues from your e-zine.

IN CONCLUSION

Hopefully, this tutorial has helped you learn the basics of starting your own e-zine and warned you about the pitfalls ahead.

Although it appears forbidding, e-zine publishing is an **enjoyable, entertaining and extremely fulfilling** job. You'll be glad that you started once the positive feedback starts pouring in.

If you found this e-book helpful, **please drop me a note** to let me know. Write to me at drmani@vsnl.com

I look forward to hearing your e-zine success stories – and of course, please don't forget to send me **instructions to subscribe** to your own e-zine!

Digitally yours,

Dr.Mani Sivasubramanian, M.D.

P.S. Very soon, I will be offering two more e-books on promoting and marketing your e-zine and generating revenues off it. Please write to let me know if you'd like to be informed as soon as they are ready.