

# **Public Domain Profits**

## **An Introduction To Profiting From Public Domain Works**

by Terry Gibbs

[www.IWantCollectibles.com](http://www.IWantCollectibles.com)

Copyright 2007 IWantCollectibles LLC  
**All Rights Reserved. Not for resale.**

**By reading this material you are agreeing to make a donation to The American Cancer Society. This is not a free book and cannot be resold or distributed to others. However, you can tell others about this book by linking to the donation page.**

To make your donation go to: <http://www.nalroo.com/fordad.php>

## Copyright And Legal Information

© **Copyright 2007 Terry Gibbs. ALL RIGHTS ARE RESERVED.** No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any informational storage or retrieval system without express written permission from the publisher. This book is sold for the use of the original purchaser only, and cannot be shared or resold.

Published by:  
IWantCollectibles LLC  
PO Box 842  
Mesa, Arizona 85211  
<http://www.iwantcollectibles.com/>

### LEGAL NOTICE

The Publisher has strived to be as accurate and complete as possible in the creation of this report, notwithstanding the fact that he does not warrant or represent at any time that the contents within are accurate due to the rapidly changing nature of the Internet.

While all attempts have been made to verify information provided in this publication, the Publisher assumes no responsibility for errors, omissions, or contrary interpretation of the subject matter herein. Any perceived slights of specific persons, peoples, or organizations are unintentional.

In practical advice books, like anything else in life, there are no guarantees of income made. Readers are cautioned to rely on their own judgment about their individual circumstances to act accordingly.

This book is not intended for use as a source of legal, business, accounting or financial advice. All readers are advised to seek services of competent professionals in legal, business, accounting, and finance field.

# Introduction To Public Domain

## What Is Public Domain?

You may have heard of works that are in the public domain being used as new products by entrepreneurs today. This is a great way to start a business, or to improve the overall bottom line of an existing business.

Work that is in the public domain includes any work for which the copyright has expired, and not been renewed, any work that was published prior to 1923, works produced by the United States Government, and other specific Governments, Work that is donated to the public domain, or any other work that has no laws that restrict its use by the public.

The work itself may be in the form of a book, an article, a song, a film, a photograph, a painting, or even an invention. These works that are not covered by copyright laws, or are no longer covered by copyright laws, are free for the public to use as they see fit.

This does not mean that if a work is freely obtained it is in the public domain. In other words, if you saw it on a website, for free, that doesn't mean that it is okay for you to use it. In fact, most things that are written down, in any form, are automatically copyrighted.

Public domain refers to work in which the copyright has run its course. According to the Copyright Office of the United States:

*“The term of copyright for a particular work depends on several factors, including whether it has been published, and, if so, the date of first publication. As a general rule, for works created after January 1, 1978, copyright protection lasts for the life of the author plus an additional 70 years. For an anonymous work,*

*a pseudonymous work, or a work made for hire, the copyright endures for a term of 95 years from the year of its first publication or a term of 120 years from the year of its creation, whichever expires first. For works first published prior to 1978, the term will vary depending on several factors.”*

(Source: <http://www.copyright.gov>)

Public domain also refers to work that was meant for the public domain, such as work that is donated, as well as work that never had a copyright, which would be work that was created prior to 1923, or work that was not copyrightable material.

These materials are **free for the public to use**, in any manner that they choose. You can use bits and pieces of a public domain work, or the entire work itself. You can create new work from the bits and pieces, or sell an entire work – as you see fit.

## **Copyright or Copyleft?**

You most likely know what a copyright is, but if you don't, according to the United States Copyright Office, a copyright is a set of rights granted by the Government for a limited time to protect creative or artistic forms or works including literary works, movies, musical works, sound recordings, paintings, photographs, software, and industrial designs.

### **But what is Copyleft?**

While Copyleft is **NOT** an actual legal term, such as copyright, it is often referred to as a **reciprocal license**. With a Copyleft, instead of a copyright, restrictions are usually imposed on a work stating that when the work is copied, modified, or used in any subsequent work, the author of that subsequent work must grant the same Copyleft rights to the public for the subsequent work. It's kind of like passing the rights forward.

Copyleft is usually symbolized with a backward C in the copyright symbol. Copyleft is often used for open source computer software, documents, music, and art. Copyleft is essentially the opposite of a copyright.

Where a copyright basically says *'no, you may not use my work,'* a Copyleft says *'yes, please use my work, but you must allow others to use the work that you create from my work as well.'*

Just as there are copyright licenses on copyrighted work, there must be Copyleft licenses for Copyleft work as well. The most commonly accepted Copyleft license is the GNU General Public License, or as it is commonly known, the GPL which can be seen at:

<http://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html>

So, if you find and wish to use work that is Copyleft, make sure that you understand that you must grant that same Copyleft privilege to the public as well. This is something that you must consider strongly before you create a product using Copyleft materials.

Be aware that you are not just giving others the right to sell your work that was derived from Copyleft material – you are granting them the right to alter the work as well!

## **Is It In The Public Domain?**

Often, people who wish to use public domain work to create new products make the mistake of assuming that work is in the public domain simply because it is old. This is a mistake that is easily avoided simply by doing a small bit of research.

When you find work that you wish to use to create your own product, you need to pay close attention to the copyright date. This will tell you whether a work is possibly in the public domain, but not necessarily

that it is actually in the public domain. Copyrights can be renewed – and if you are looking at the copyright date of an original publication, the new copyright may not be reflected.

After you determine that a work is eligible to be in the public domain, due to its copyright being dated the required elapsed time, you still need to contact the copyright office in that country to certify that the work is in fact in the public domain before you use it.

Most copyright offices will require a research fee. You can avoid this fee by going to the copyright office and doing your own research. You can search some databases online, without paying a fee. For instance, if you want to look for work that was copyrighted in the United States, you can go to the Copy Right Office website at <http://www.copyright.gov> and do a search in their online database.

Also, make sure that you compare the copyright date of the work that you are inquiring about with the copyright laws in the country where the copyright was obtained – not in the country where you reside. The copyright laws of each country affect everybody, including people who do not live in that country.

Remember that you should never assume anything. Always get certification that a work is in the public domain before you use it. You will save yourself a lot of time, not to mention a great deal of money and embarrassment!

### **The Harder It Is To Find, The More Valuable It Is**

When you are shopping for antiques, **the older it is, the more valuable it usually is**. However, when you are searching for public domain works, it isn't necessarily how old it is that adds value to it. **How difficult the work is to find or obtain adds value!**

You've heard '*if it was easy, everybody would be doing it.*' Well, the same applies to public domain works – if it was easy to find,

everybody would have it, and it wouldn't be worth much. For this reason, you should make it a point to seek out that which isn't easily obtainable if you want to profit.

This doesn't mean that you can't profit from public domain works that are easy to find – it just means that you will profit more from that which is hard to find. Everybody knows that we all want and are willing to pay well for those things which we cannot easily get!

Think of original art pieces, such as the Mona Lisa. The Mona Lisa is in the public domain, and there are many, many copies of it. But the original Mona Lisa – the Mona Lisa that was painted in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Leonardo da Vinci, on the canvas that he painted it on, with the oil paints that he painted with, has no monetary value assigned to it. It is priceless – but it resides in a room in the Louvre in Paris that cost 7.5 million dollars to build. People pay just to view the Mona Lisa – and many travel around the world to see it.

While the work that you find probably won't require a 7.5 million dollar room of its own, you do want to seek out public domain works that either are worth something today, or can be made to be worth something. Depending on what you are hoping to accomplish, it may take quite a bit of research, time, and effort on your part – but it will be well worth it in the end!

# Searching For Public Domain Works

## Selecting Public Domain Works

Before you start your search for public domain works that you can use to create products, you need to have a clear objective in mind. In other words, just knowing that you want to use a public domain work to create your own product isn't enough. You need to know what type of work it is that you want to create, and what public domain work will fill your need.

It is never a good idea to go into anything blindly. You will of course want to conduct market research, just as you would with any other type of product that you wanted to create. Is there a market for your idea?

A good way to find out if there is a market is to go to a search engine and type in keywords that would be used to search for your potential product. Pay close attention to the sponsored ads. Also go to your local bookstore and look at magazines that relate to your topic, again paying close attention to the ads. If you go to your public library, you can see back issues as well. Have certain advertisers purchased advertising space in previous issues as well? When dollars are being spent on advertising consistently, you can bet that there is a market.

Once you know there is a market for your idea, the next step is to determine how you want to deliver your product. Will it be a physical product such as a DVD, a CD, or a printed book or manual? Will it be a digital product, such as an E-Book? You need to determine this, because the format that the public domain work you choose may matter a great deal to you.

Now that you know what you want to create, and what format you want to deliver your product in to your customers, it will be easier to

determine exactly what public domain material you are seeking – and of course knowing that will lead you to the right source to find it!

## **Searching For Public Domain Works**

Just knowing where to find public domain works does not necessarily make it an easy task. Consider the fact that there are literally millions – if not trillions – of works that are in the public domain. Unless you know what you are looking for, and where to look for it, it could be like searching for a needle in a haystack...and sometimes it is like that even if you do know what you are looking for and where to look!

You may think that you can go to one of the various public domain resources and just browse to find a public domain work that you can use to make a profit. The chances of this happening in this way are about as good as you winning the next lottery drawing without buying a ticket. The amount of sources and materials at those sources is incredibly overwhelming.

First, you need a concrete idea. You need to know what it is that you want to accomplish and what type of work will accomplish it. Then, you must determine the best source for finding such a work. Then, you must search at that source. If you know the exact work that you are looking for, you will of course find what you are looking for faster.

You may also need to consider how much or what type of editing you plan to do to a work before you begin your search. The format that the work is in may become an issue, unless it can easily be converted to a format that is suitable for editing purposes.

You may have to download and look at many public domain works before you find what you are looking for. The good news is that your search for a suitable work that is in the public domain will most likely be the hardest part of creating your own product – once you have it, the majority of the work has been done!

## Finding Public Domain Films

You may not plan on becoming a famous movie director, but you still have a use for public domain films, broadcasts, commercials, and sound bites. These can be used on websites, or to create CD's or DVD's that you can sell.

By far, Buyout Footage at <http://www.buyoutfootage.com> is one of the hottest places to obtain film. There is also great film that you can use at <http://www.archive.org/details/prelinger> and also at The Library of Congress at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/mopic/>.

At the Live Music Archive at [Archive.org](http://Archive.org), you can find films of live music shows. You can also find free footage at the UCLA Film and Television Archive which is located at <http://cinema.library.ucla.edu/>.

While these are excellent sources for finding public domain films, it is important to realize that you must purchase the work from most of these sources, with the exception of the public domain works found at [Archive.org](http://Archive.org). However, the fee may be well worth it depending on what you intend to do with the film that you want.

There are various ways that you can use old film, broadcasts, and commercials for financial gain. You may want to use the entire work, or just use parts of it for your product. You could even make a collection of old commercials for an informative marketing course!

Again, you need to be aware of the format that the film you want is delivered in, and make sure that you have the appropriate software or equipment to manipulate the film to turn it into the product that you want it to be, if editing it is what you have in mind, or to transfer it to the medium that you want it to be on if you just want to change the delivery format. For instance, you may want to change something that is on video tape to DVD.

## Finding Public Domain Music and Photos

You can use public domain music and photographs for your website, or for CD's or DVD's that you plan to sell. In fact, finding public domain music and photographs is really quite easy, and such items can usually be obtained at no cost.

You can even obtain public domain sheet music, and possibly compile a collection that you can copyright and sell! You could obtain the actual music files for public domain music and create your own music CD as well.

Starting with photographs, there are numerous sources. There are so many collections that exist online, a good place to start your search is at the Wikipedia resource for public domain images, which can be found at:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public\\_domain\\_image\\_resources](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_domain_image_resources)

While this is a great place to start, there are still many other good resources as well.

Other sources for public domain photographs include:

- Eastman House - <http://www.eastmanhouse.org>
- The New York Public Library - <http://www.nypl.org/digital/index.htm>
- US Dept. of Interior - <http://www.doi.gov/gallery.html>

For sheet music, good resources include:

- Choral Public Domain Library - [http://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Main_Page)
- The Music Library - [http://mus.lib.ru/index\\_eng.html](http://mus.lib.ru/index_eng.html)

- Sheet Music Archive - <http://www.sheetmusicarchive.net/>
- Public Domain Music - <http://www.pdmusic.org/>

For actual public domain music, you should check Musopen at <http://www.musopen.com/>. Actual music is harder to find than sheet music in the public domain. However, if you can find the sheet music for public domain music, the chances are good that you can probably find the actual music on the Internet as well. Therefore, when you want music files, start by finding the sheet music first, to ensure that it is indeed in the public domain.

Again, most of these resources will not charge for the files. There are some really good finds just waiting to be found – and there is a lot of money to be made from these ‘oldie but goodies’ if they are used in the right way.

## **Getting Public Domain Materials From The Government**

The Government publishes a lot of information – on a wide variety of topics. Believe it or not, all of that material is in the public domain – in terms of materials published by the United States Government anyway. Other Governments may have different rules pertaining to this.

When you want to use work that was published by a Government other than the US Government, it is very important that you find out for sure if you are free to use the work, and how you are able to use the work. For instance, Canada claims Crown Copyright to their materials. Each different country has different rules and laws – so make sure you check.

But in terms of materials produced by the United States Government, it is free for anyone to use – and there is literally tons of information waiting for you! Below is a list of US Government Offices where you

can obtain free public domain work that was published by the Government.

The Library of Congress – <http://catalog.loc.gov>

The IRS – <http://www.irs.gov>

US Government Printing Office –  
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cgp/index.html>

Government Information Connection -  
<http://www.library.unt.edu/govinfo/subject/catsindx.html>

National Security Agency - <http://www.nsa.gov/public/>

US Department of State - <http://www.state.gov/>

NARA – <http://www.archives.gov>

FirstGov – <http://www.firstgov.com>

Federal Citizen Information Center – <http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov>

The FBI – <http://www.fbi.gov>

CDC – <http://www.cdc.gov>

This is just a small list of the governmental websites that contain information that is in the public domain. Even if these sites don't have the information published on their website, they will provide instructions of ordering or obtaining publications that they have. The US Government Printing Office is always a good place to start your search.

Furthermore, you can also go to Google at <http://www.google.com> and type in "not copyrighted" site: .gov or "public domain" site:.gov.

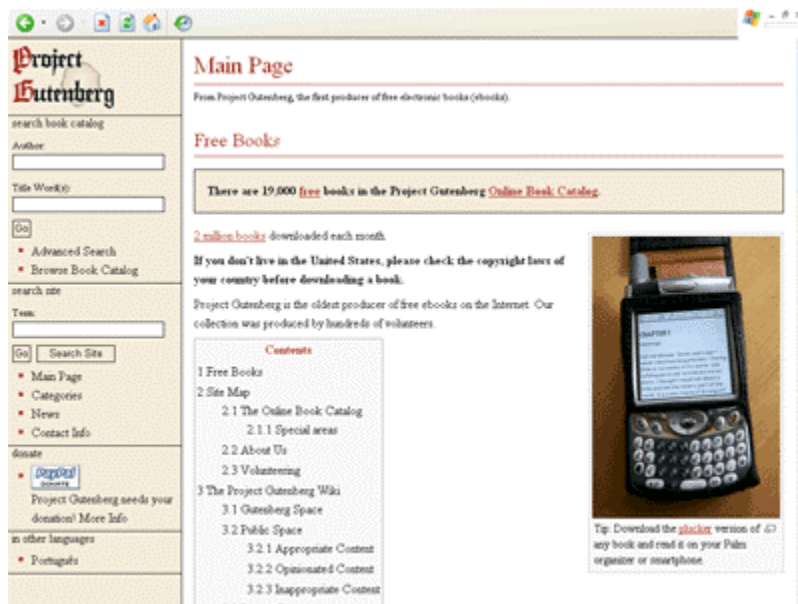
Make sure that you include the quotation marks in the appropriate place when searching.

## Finding Public Domain Works Online

Obviously, when you start your search for works in the public domain, you will begin your search online. While you can find just about anything and everything that you want online, you should also consider doing some offline searches as well, especially to find public domain works that are more rare – and ultimately more valuable.

This doesn't mean that you can't find public domain works that are valuable online as well. In fact, there are literally thousands of resources, and even some commercial directories of places where these works can be found.

You may want to start your online search at the Internet Public Library at <http://www.ipl.org>. There are numerous books that you can view online on a wide variety of topics.



The Project Gutenberg is another good source at <http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog>. Archive.org at <http://www.archive.org> provides over a hundred thousand links to public domain work.

If you are looking for public domain photographs, a great place to start your search is the Library of Congress at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/> which houses approximately 13.7 million images – all of which are in the public domain. The US Department of Interior also has a nice collection of images at <http://www.doi.gov/gallery.html> .

The Library of congress also houses public domain broadcasts, motion pictures, and sound recordings at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/mopic/>. You can find more public domain film at <http://www.buyoutfootage.com/pages/pd.html> and The Digital Media Bank at <http://www.csuchico.edu/lcmt/dmb/imagesources.html>.

There is also a lot of software that is in the public domain. A great source for public domain software is The Public Domain Software Library at <http://aixpdslib.seas.ucla.edu/> and Source Forge at <http://sourceforge.net/index.php> .

Finally, Wikipedia has a nice resource for finding public domain works in various genres. Here, you will find a comprehensive list of resources divided into numerous categories. Just choose the category that best suits your needs. Take a look at:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Public\\_domain\\_resources](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Public_domain_resources)

# Using Public Domain Materials

## How Do I Benefit?

Because works that are in the public domain are free for the public to use, however they see fit, those works can be used to create new products – or even sold as they are for profit.

As an entrepreneur, you can use public domain works to add to an existing product line, or to create one if you don't already have any products of your own. If you do not change the work in anyway, the author of the work remains the same. In other words, you can sell it, but you can't put your name on it.

If you edit the work, however, or include bits and pieces of public domain work to create a new product, your name goes on it, and you can copyright it. This is one of the absolute fastest ways, next to purchasing resell rights, to create a product of your very own. While purchasing resell rights to a product may be faster, works that are in the public domain and used to create new products may prove to be more valuable – meaning you can charge more.

Using public domain works not only saves the time that may be involved in product creation, but it will also save you money when it comes to product creation or development. The work has been done already. Furthermore, if you know where to look, there are millions of public domain works that can be obtained freely.

When it comes to information, there is one solid fact that will never change. Information is information. It rarely changes. It may become outdated, and no longer useful – but it doesn't usually change. Furthermore, outdated information can be 'freshened up' easily enough, and information that is no longer useful may also be made useful once again.

Remember, also, that public domain works does not just pertain to written materials. Millions of Films, music, photos, and even inventions are in the public domain – just waiting for some enterprising individual to come along, dust them off, and make them useful once again!

## **Digitalizing Public Domain Material**

While you can find numerous public domain works that have already been digitized, you may come across public domain works that you want to use that are not digitized. In this case, you will need to convert them to a digital format before you can edit them.

In terms of photographs, videos, film, sound recordings, and music that are not digitized, it is fairly easy to convert these. Photographs can be scanned. Videos and film can be converted to DVD's. Sound recordings and music can be converted to CD's or MP3's. If you do not have the equipment to make these conversions, you can hire a service to do this for you, and the costs are usually quite reasonable.

Work that is in print is a different matter. While you can scan items and then run an optical character recognition (OCR) program on them, most OCR programs require word by word checking. In most cases, it is easier to just retype the printed work into a document on your computer, or hire a typist to do this for you, if you are unable to find the work in digital format.

You will need to scan any photographs that are included in the work, and reassemble it on your computer to include it in the text. Hiring a typist doesn't cost very much. Typists usually charge either by the word or by the page. Shop around for the best prices if you don't want to do the work yourself.

If you are only using portions of written work, you only need to convert those portions that you intend to use, instead of the entire work. However, don't be lazy where non-digitized printed work is concerned. Often work that is not available online will be worth more to you – and your potential customers – than work that is readily available online already.

In fact, you may be able to reproduce the entire work in digitized form and make a nice profit without changing anything else about the work, simply because it isn't already available online. Always consider all of the possibilities!

## **Editing Public Domain Works**

In many cases, you may want to edit the public domain works that you choose in order to create your very own product. Not only is this acceptable, in most cases, it is recommended. When you make the public domain work your own, you can copyright the product that you create – even though it is created with public domain works.

Furthermore, when you edit a public domain work to make it your own, and you copyright it, you can put your name on it as the author. This allows you to build brand recognition and to establish yourself as an expert in your field.

Editing a public domain work isn't as hard as you may think it is. If the work is a book, it is a good idea to find the work online, as opposed to finding the actual book. You can scan the pages onto your computer, but this takes a lot of time, and even then, the scanned pages won't be documents that you can easily manipulate. However, you can hire a typist to type the entire text into a document and email it to you.

If the public domain work is a film or music, it is easier to transfer the work to your computer, if you are unable to find it on the Internet in a

digital format. You would then use audio or video software to edit the work. There are also services that you can hire to transfer film and audio to a media that you can use on your computer, such as a CD or DVD.

It is very important that you look over the public domain work carefully – especially if it is printed work. Information that is printed in the work may be out dated, or even totally obsolete, and you will need to change it or completely delete portions of the information.

While you can put your name on your edited work, it is a good idea to give credit to the original author as well. This can be done within the product itself. Just because a work is old and in the public domain doesn't mean that your potential customers haven't seen it before! It is bad form to take credit for something that you didn't originally think of yourself – even if it is legal in terms of public domain works.

## **Using Parts Of Public Domain Works**

The greatest thing about using public domain works to create new products is that you have the right to break them up and tear them apart to create something that is truly your own very easily. In fact, you can use various parts of different public domain works to create one product of your own.

As a general rule, the product you create becomes more valuable when you use various works and include your own work in the product as well. You can literally take the ideas of yesterday and apply them to today's world, or even reinvent old ideas, making them useful once again.

Naturally, when creating any product, you want the value of that product to your customers to be as high as possible. In fact, you want to develop a reputation for over delivering for the best long term

results. Combining public domain works with your own works accomplishes this objective.

Do you remember Al Yankovic? Al took songs that other people wrote and turned them into new – funny – songs. He used the same musical tune of the original song, and changed the words to make the song funny – and made millions of dollars in the process. He took what worked for someone else, what worked for him, and combined the two. You can do the same with public domain works – even if that work is printed, as opposed to musical in nature.

The idea is to take a public work, and make it better than it originally was. When you make it better, it becomes more valuable. Making a work that is in the public domain better than it originally was may not be easy – but it will usually be well worth it. Put forth the effort that is required to make the product that will have your name on it the best that it can be, and you will reap great rewards!

# **Making Money From Public Domain Works**

## **How You Can Profit From Public Domain Works**

There are many different ways that you can use public domain works to profit. How you choose to use public domain works will be in direct proportion with exactly what you are trying to accomplish. For instance, if you don't have a product, you may use these works to create a product. If you do have a product, you may use public domain works to sell that product, or to make that product more valuable. You can even profit from public domain works without having or creating a product at all.

The first way to profit is to find a public domain work that relates to your market, and rewrite that work to bring it up-to-date. You can also use various parts of different works to create the product. You can alternately sell a public domain work as it already is, as long as the information still applies to today's world.

Many people use public domain works to create a collection of some type. You can create collections of articles, collections of art or photographs, or collections of music. The possibilities are endless, and when you use public domain works to create a collection, you can put your name on the collection as the author, even though you aren't the author of the individual works within your collection.

As stated earlier, you can even profit from public domain works without having or creating a product. You can use public domain works to sell affiliate products. You can give the public domain work, in digital format, away to those who purchase products through you.

Finally, you can use public domain works for content purposes. You can use the work as content for your website, or as articles that can be submitted to the article repositories to build website traffic.

There are many more ways that you can use public domain works for profit. All you need to do is put your imagination to work, and choose the right public domain work for your purposes.

## **Sell Public Domain Works As Is**

Make no mistake about it – a lot can be done with public domain works, and most of the time, using public domain works brings in profit. However, there is another option for using public domain works to create a product. You can simply leave the public domain work just as it is and sell it.

Leaving public domain work ‘as is’ doesn’t mean that you should not digitize it. People like to have products that they can instantly download. You should also convert the work to a format that is more useable in today’s world. For instance, old film and video should be converted to DVD. Old music should be converted to CD. But these conversions can be done without changing anything else about the public domain work.

If you are delivering the product physically, such as in book form, you will obviously need to have the work printed. It will then either need to be bound by a book binder, or turned into a manual. Either way is acceptable, but a bound book may bring in more money. You should also have the book in E-Book format as well for instant delivery.

Obviously, you do not want to use public domain works ‘as is’ and claim it as your own work. This is not only dishonest, but it will ruin your credibility. Instead, you could package it and sell it with the

author's name in tact, but with you as the 'presenter.' This is perfectly acceptable, and can still be used to build your brand.

If you are using a public domain work 'as is' for your product, it is very important that you review the work completely to make sure that all of the information it contains is still useable today. If it isn't, you shouldn't sell it 'as is.' Instead, you can sell it mostly 'as is' and make notations in the text concerning the outdated information, supplying the reader with more current information. When you do this, again use the original author's name, but include your own name as well as the person who updated the information.

## **Package Public Domain Works With Other Products**

These days, it's all about the bonuses. The most successful Internet Marketers know this, and they add countless valuable bonuses to their products, and even to products that they are selling for other people. You have probably seen this done, even if you didn't pay much attention to it at the time – everybody loves to get more value for their money, and that is a desire that offering a bonus fulfills.

If you aren't increasing the value of your product packages, you simply cannot compete in today's world. Using public domain works to create bonuses is a viable option that does not take a lot of time or work on your part, since the bulk of the work has been done.

You can use public domain works as bonuses with your products or affiliate products. In most cases, the work must be digitized, but this is easily done. If the product is your own, you simply advertise the public domain bonus on your sales page, and when the product is purchased, make sure that your customer receives download or access information automatically.

In the case of affiliate products it works a little differently, however. Since the sale will go through the merchants' payment processor, the customer will need to come back to you in order to collect their bonus. It is acceptable to ask customers to send you a copy of their purchase receipt, after which, you send them the download link for the advertised bonus.

You can also use public domain works as part of your product. It may be a separate product that is packaged with the product when it is sold, whether the product is physical or digital. The public domain product that you create to use as a bonus should also be available to purchase separately as well. This will give your customers an adequate sense of the value of the bonus product when they are viewing your sales page for the affiliate product or for the original product that you are offering.

My book [Profitable Bonuses](#) explains using bonuses to increase sales. You can get a copy at:

[www.Profitable-Bonus.com](http://www.Profitable-Bonus.com)

## **Sell Resell Rights on Public Domain Materials**

Resell rights are very big on the Internet Marketing scene today. If you have resell rights, it means that you have the right to sell a product and to keep all of the profits. In most cases, if you have resell rights, you do not have the right to change the product or to name yourself as the author of the work – you simply have the right to resell it, and keep all of the profits.

Public domain work that you use to create a product can also be sold with resell rights, which increases its value in most cases.

It is a good idea, however, to limit the number of resell rights that you sell in order to ensure that the product retains that high value. If the market becomes saturated with the product, the value drops dramatically.

You need to include a resell rights license with the product when you sell it. This license should spell out exactly what rights the reseller has. For instance, it is a good idea to limit the amount of money that the product can be sold for. If you sold the product for \$50, you may not want to allow others to sell the product for more or less than \$50.

You may also want to state in the resell license that the product is not to be changed. Even if you use public domain works to create the product, if the original work was changed by you, it becomes yours. This means that you can copyright the work. You can retain that copyright, and still grant others the right to sell the product for 100% of the profits.

Alternately, you can opt to sell your product which was created with public domain work as a private label rights product. This gives the people who purchase the private label rights more choices. They can put their name on the product as the author, and make changes to the work as well – again selling it for 100% of the profits.

You can usually charge more for private label rights than you can for resell rights. You can also grant master resell rights, which gives those who hold master resell rights the right to sell resell rights.

## **Sell Public Domain Works As Digital Products**

We've become a digital world. Since the advent of the Internet, the cost of computers has steadily dropped, enabling the majority of homes in the world to own personal computers. For this reason, it is

always a good idea to have your physical products in digital format as well.

Often, you will find public domain works in the offline world, and need to convert them to digital products. If you want to convert film, music, or sound bites to digital format, this is easily done with the right equipment, and pictures can easily be scanned. However, converting written work to digital format takes a bit more work. It has to be re-typed!

Since typing hundreds of pages can take a great deal of time, you may want to hire a typist to convert the work to digital format for you. Typists usually charge by the page or by the word, but the prices are usually quite reasonable and affordable.

There are also services that will convert film, music, and sound bites to digital format if you do not have the necessary equipment. Costs for this type of work vary depending on the media that is being converted, and how much of it there is to convert.

If you do not intend to use an entire work for your product, you can also choose to just have particular parts of the written work converted to digital format. This will save both time and money. Any pictures from the work that should be included can easily be scanned to your computer.

Once non-digitized work is converted to digital work, it can be edited and manipulated however you see fit.

You can use word processors, graphics programs, and sound programs to make the changes that you desire, but if you don't have such software, or you don't know how to use it, you can also hire freelancing professionals to make changes for you as well.

Once you have a digital file, you can sell it over and over again with no printing or fulfillment costs.

## **Sell Public Domain Works As Physical Products**

While we have become a digitized world, people still like physical products – including products that they can use on their computers, such as CD's and DVD's. Marketers also know that physical products typically bring more profits than digital products as well, because they are conceived to be more valuable.

For editorial reasons, you will still need to convert non-digitized public domain works to digital work. Once the product is created and perfected, you will then need to convert it back to a physical product.

You have many different choices in this area.

The work can be made into a physical book or manual. This is easier to do than one might imagine. You simply send the work to a printing company who will print out the work and assemble it for you as you specify. The work can then be sent directly to your fulfillment company for filling orders.

The work can be put on CD or DVD. If the work is in presentation format, a DVD will work well. However, if the work will be turned into software, a CD will be more appropriate.

While you can usually make the master copy yourself on your own machine, you should definitely send the master to a replication company to have multiple copies made.

Often, you can find a company that does it all – printing, replication, and fulfillment. Usually, this will be the best value, since you can get all the work done in one place and then sent directly from there to your customers.

Having a digital and physical form of the same product is always a good idea. You can offer the digital product at a lower cost. Some will prefer the digital product since it can be accessed or downloaded right away, while others will prefer to wait for a physical product.

## **Building Membership Websites With Public Domain Material**

Membership websites, where members pay monthly fees, are fairly big right now. However, there is a problem that all membership sites face – lack of content.

As with any other website, you must continually add fresh content to your membership website. In fact, fresh content is even more vital for a membership website, in order to keep the members happy.

Obviously, writing all of the needed content can be very time consuming. But you can use public domain works as content for your site in various ways. This will save you both time and money – and keep your members happy at the same time!

If you find a public domain book that is suitable for your market, you can use chapters or portions of chapters as articles for your website. You can even break these public domain works into portions and create entire courses out of them for your members.

Books aren't the only way to get content. You can also create website videos out of old film or broadcasts that apply to your market. You can even use old photographs and sound bites. You can also take text, sound, film, and photographs and make power point presentations that can be viewed on your website.

You can literally get years and year's worth of content for your membership website from public domain works, if you use the work

correctly. The work may be useable as is, or it may need to be freshened up to make it valuable and useable by today's world.

In fact, if you find enough public domain works that are useable to your members, you can arrange content well in advance, and just post it to your members' website at the appropriate scheduled times in a matter of minutes.

When this is done in advance, it takes a great deal of the work out of maintaining a membership website.

# Public Domain Legal Issues

## The Legal Aspects of Using Public Domain Works

There are many unanswered, hard to find answers pertaining to the legal aspects of using work in the public domain. However, the rules are really quite simple. If the work is in the public domain, you can use it however you wish to use it. The real trouble comes in determining if a work is in fact in the public domain.

However, you may use work that is in the public domain, without gaining permission from the author.

If you change the work, you can become the author of it, and copyright it. If you do not change the work, you may sell it as is, but it is a good idea not to put yourself as the author of the work in this case.

That's pretty much it. Other than this, you are free to do as you will with public domain works. You can use part or all of a work, you can convert printed work to digital work, you can use bits and pieces of public domain music or films, you can use public domain photos however you like.

When you change a public domain work, however, and make it your own, you do need to copyright it.

For instance, if you use a bunch of old photographs to create a collection of photographs that collection is copyrightable material, even though each individual picture is in the public domain. Someone can still use an individual photograph from your collection – but they cannot use the entire collection.

Again, the most important thing to understand and know is how to determine that a work is in fact in the public domain.

That was covered in a previous chapter, so take the time to verify that a work is in the public domain before you use it, and also make sure you understand the difference between public domain and fair use.

## **International Law and Public Domain**

When it comes to determining whether a work is in the public domain or not, you need to pay attention to the country that the original copyright, if any, was acquired in. Each country has different copyright laws that determine when a work becomes public domain material.

International law is just what it says – International.

In other words, the copyright laws of Japan apply to people in other countries who want to use work that was copyrighted in Japan. If the work is still covered by Japan copyright law, but would no longer be covered under United States copyright laws, the work is not in the public domain – in any country.

You must adhere to the copyright laws of the country where the work was copyrighted in the first place. This is true for all works copyrighted in all countries, no matter what country you may reside or use the work in.

The copyright laws are not the same in every country. It is important that you find out what the copyright laws are before you assume that a work is in the public domain, for the country where that work was copyrighted.

Too often, people assume that copyright laws are the same internationally, and this is just not true.

If you do not take the time to determine that a work is indeed in the public domain, you may be infringing on someone else's copyright. This can lead to large fines, lawsuits, and possibly imprisonment in some countries. If nothing else, it will most certainly damage your reputation!

Do not assume that nothing can happen to you legally if you use work that is copyrighted in a country that you do not reside in. People in other countries can instigate lawsuits in the country where you reside just as easily as they can sue in their own country.

## **Copyrighting Your Results**

Often, it is feasible to create a product using bits and pieces of various public domain works, and to add your own work here and there as well within the product. In this way, a public domain work can easily be turned into a copyrighted work with your name on it – and it can be a product that is truly yours.

No matter which topic you think of, you can bet that there are numerous authors who have written about that topic, and many of them will have different views.

You can include various different views in your work, and throw your own view in there as well – just to give your readers as much information on your topic as possible.

Bits and pieces of various public domain works can also be used to create collections.

For instance, you can create a collection of articles on a specific topic, a collection of sheet music, a collection of images, a collection of music on a music CD, or even a collection of film clips on a DVD. The possibilities are endless.

While each bit and piece of the public domain work remains in the public domain, when it is compiled into a separate work, or a collection, the work or the collection can be copyrighted, and you can put your own name on it. However, you should give credit to the original author, especially in the realm of collections.

There is a very good reason for this. You don't want to try to make people believe that you created something that you did not create.

For instance, if you created a collection of famous art that included the Mona Lisa – which is in the public domain – nobody is going to believe that you were the artist! They won't have a problem with you being the collector, however.

## **Using A Creative Commons License**

A creative commons license is much like a Copyleft license.

The creative commons license was developed by Creative Commons, a non-profit organization started for the purpose of gathering creative work that others can build on and share.

A creative commons license allows those who hold copyrights to grant some of those rights to the public, while retaining other rights.

This was originally done because current copyright laws prohibit changing copyrighted information. This enables you to use work that has a creative commons license, but if you plan to sell a product, a creative commons license isn't really what you want to use.

Furthermore, it is not ethical to use work that has a creative commons license and turn it into a copyrighted product. This is not only unethical, but it can and will damage your reputation and possibly your credibility.

Creative commons licenses are typically used in the academic and creative community, much like Copyleft material – where one person starts with an idea and allows others to add to it to make it better for the greater good, without cost.

When it comes to developing products, using work that is in the public domain, as opposed to work that has a Copyleft license or a creative commons license is advised. This is typically more acceptable, and you can do what you want with the work you create from the public domain material, including making a profit.

Pay attention to how work is licensed. A copyright symbol has a C enclosed in a circle. A Copyleft symbol is a backwards C enclosed in a circle, and a creative commons license is indicated by CC. Public domain work will usually have the copyright symbol, but the copyright term will have expired.

You should not assume that the copyright has expired, however. Instead, you should do your homework and certify that the copyright has expired before using the materials.

# After Word, Or A Word of Warning

You now have a good idea of how to profit from items in the public domain. I am sure you have some ideas for projects and are ready to get started. But before you get started one word of advice.

Don't start out with a large project. Start with something small.

Here's an example from my past. . .

While this didn't involve public domain materials, it's a good example. When I first started selling items online, I sold screensavers. I took pictures of my toy trains, and after a few minutes cleaning the images up, compiled them into a slide show screensaver.

About two years after I started selling screensavers, I got a call from a train collector who wanted some advice about selling screensavers. He wanted to put together a screensaver showing catalog covers from more famous manufacturers. I'd looked into doing the same thing, but the companies wanted huge royalties for the use of their copyrighted images.

After telling him the demand for royalties made me decide not to go forward with it, he said he wasn't in a position to pay the royalties, and he'd already spent 18 months putting together the screensaver. I was dumbfounded.

It turns out he'd bought the best scanner he could find, then bought Adobe Photoshop, and had been going through the scanned images one pixel at a time cleaning up the images! Even worse, the guy had no marketing experience.

It took him another three years to finish his screensaver. By that time, I'd flooded the market with mine. I was selling so few screensavers, I

started giving them away as an enticement to get people to my website.

This guy spent years working on a project that never panned out. I doubt he recouped his investment even if you ignore his time. I spent six hours making my first screensavers, and a week creating the sales materials. Then I went on to sell thousands of them.

Start small. Do something you can complete quickly. You'll need to learn marketing skills in order to sell your products. The best way to learn marketing is to get out there and try to sell something. The faster you start selling, the faster you'll get results.

Thanks for reading,

Terry Gibbs