



DOMAIN MONETIZATION 101



by Morgan Linton

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INTRODUCTION

There are two ways that domain investors make money with their domains - selling and monetization. Selling domains involves identifying buyers for your domains and actively contacting them and negotiating a successful sale. Selling domains can be a lot of work, but it's all worth it for a big sale.

Domain monetization is the process of putting a website on your domain so that it can rank well in search engines and generate revenue through targeted ads. While there is the up-front work of building a website, the goal of monetization is to setup a passive income stream so that every month your domains bring-in a consistent income.

When I started-out in the Domaining world back in 2007 I was like most new Domainers - I didn't have any valuable domains, but I had a lot of great ideas! I had registered domain names that *I thought* sounded like they could be worth a fortune - and what do you know - they were even available to register! Soon I found myself trying to sell domains that *I thought* were great but that most people wouldn't pay more than the registration fee for - and heck, that's what I paid myself!

Now there's two kinds of people in this world - those who give-up at the first sign of failure and those who see failure as an opportunity to excel. For those who know me, you know very well - I don't quit, not only that but I also like taking the road less traveled - I find the best opportunities are sometimes where others aren't looking!

It all started with one .us domain name that I purchased for \$4.99 during a Go Daddy special back in early 2008. I had spent my first 4-5 months in the industry registering terrible names and attempting to sell them, I was able to sell a few but I was making \$50-\$100 per sale and I had to WORK for the sales. It was that moment that I decided to change my approach, and through the process changed my life forever.

So what did I do with that .us domain I paid \$4.99 for?

I sat-down one afternoon and wrote four short articles about "stimulus checks" - the subject of the domain. Next I put these articles on a small website along with a few Google AdSense ads. Then I went back to trying to sell my domains, I was emailing everyone I could think of, listing them on every site I could find, and then my first AdSense check came.

The first check was far from the highlight here though. By it's second month in existence my little \$4.99 .us domain ranked on the first page of Yahoo, in fact, it out-ranked the IRS's own website about stimulus checks! My traffic doubled and with it my revenue, other domains followed the same trend as they continued to get indexed and ranked better in Google and Yahoo.

By mid-2008 I was generating a consistent monthly income with domains - and it was all passive! In August of 2008 my girlfriend and I took some time-off and traveled around Europe and Mexico. It was great to have the break and I didn't do a thing with my domains during the trip.

When we got-back from the trip I was dying to see how my domains did - this was the real test - could I really generate income without spending a single minute on Domaining? The results were staggering - August was my best month ever, and from that moment on I knew I had discovered something incredible.

Since then I've continued to consistently build-out more domains every month. For me it's never been about generating \$1,000 with one domain but instead generating \$100 with ten domains. For me this represents having diversified investments - that way if one domain has a loss in traffic/revenue it doesn't dramatically reduce my overall revenue.

In this guide I will explain my roadmap for successfully monetizing domains. In under twenty pages I'll show users of every experience-level how to get started monetizing domain names. The best part about this guide is that all the tools I'll be recommending are free and you'll never need to write a single line of code!

So why do I give this guide away for free? I strongly believe that the more people that join this industry the more money we will all make. There is no limit to the number of domains you can monetize and there are more than enough domains to go around! If you're ready to get started - dive in! In under an hour you will be armed with the knowledge you need to turn your domain names into a lifetime of passive income!

DOMAIN MONETIZATION: STEP 1

PICKING WHICH DOMAINS TO MONETIZE

The first step of Domain Monetization is so important, yet oftentimes overlooked by new Domainers. Not every domain name is a good candidate for monetization - in fact you could have a domain with excellent re-sale value that might not be a great candidate for monetization.

A domain is a good candidate for monetization if it meets the following criteria:

- There are lots of people searching for the EXACT keyword(s) in the domain
- There are strong advertising options in the category
- The category is not over-saturated
- The domain does not infringe on any existing Trademark

I'll go through each of these elements to make sure you completely understand the metrics and then I'll show you how to easily evaluate domains yourself.

There are lots of people searching for the EXACT keyword in the domain

Almost 30% of Google's ranking algorithm is based on domain name match. If the keywords in your domain exactly match a popular search query, Google could give you a nice bonus in your ranking. It is crucial that your domain exactly matches a popular keyword phrase and doesn't simply contain a popular keyword.

For example - BuyNewHouse.com exactly matches the popular search phrase "buy new house" whereas BuyHouse1234.com exactly matches the very unpopular search phrase "buy house 1234" - see the difference!

There are strong advertising options in the category

Can you easily think of advertising programs or products that directly target your visitor? If not then how do you expect to generate revenue?

For example - CreditCardDebt.com could sell eBooks about debt as well as generate revenue through lead generation. BuyFreshFruit.com - on the other hand doesn't have an easy way to generate revenue - nobody wants to buy books about fruit and selling fruit just isn't an easy way to make money online!

The category is not over-saturated

Building a five-page content site in a category that has tens of million of websites is literally like throwing an atom into a haystack! Domain monetization is about finding domains that can rank relatively quickly, targeting broad or very popular search terms means waiting a long time to rank well.

This is where even many experienced Domainers go wrong. While you could definitely build a much bigger, more complex site to rank well for a strong generic keyword, it's the less-saturated categories that represent the low-hanging fruit - and that's what we're going for!

The domain does not infringe on any existing Trademark

I can't emphasize this one enough - if your domain name has an existing company name in it - don't monetize it! It this kind of trademark infringement and cybersquatting that give the Domain Name Industry a bad name.

You can quickly check if a domain might potentially violate an existing trademark using Valuate.com. Simply enter the domain you wish to evaluate and then after the evaluation appears select "Trademark Checking" from the "View" drop-down menu.

The most important thing to remember about Domain Monetization is that your goal is to be able to build many small sites quickly - not one or two big sites. I'm not saying you can't make money with full-scale websites, they are just expensive to develop and require putting most of your focus on one domain.

What I'm teaching you is a system that you can use over and over again. It involves identifying domains that have the best potential to EASILY convert traffic to revenue. There are some great domains out there with excellent search volume that just don't offer an easy way to convert traffic to revenue.

In the next step I'll teach you how to use the Google Adwords Keyword Tool to see exactly how many people are searching for the keywords in your domain and how valuable your keywords are to advertisers!

DOMAIN MONETIZATION: STEP 2

DOES THE DOMAIN PASS MY MONETIZATION TEST?

I have created a simple test that I put all my domains through even if I already think they are perfect for monetization. This is the final barrier I put-up before deeming that a domain is indeed ready for monetization.

You want to be VERY picky as to which domains you develop - and for good reason! Development takes your time, or if you don't want to take your time then it takes your money. Either way, spending time developing domains that don't have good monetization potential is like doing work without getting paid!

If your domain passes my test you can be confident that it has good monetization potential so development won't be a waste of your time.

DOMAIN MONETIZATION TEST

Only develop domains with over 1,000 exact searches and a CPC above \$5.00

That's it! It may seem simple but the above test is a great way to easily determines which domains are the best candidates for monetization. You can use the Google Adwords Keyword Tool to find this information about any keyword phrase. The best thing about the tool is it's completely free so you don't need to spend a dime evaluating your portfolio!

I recommend that you wait to register a domain until it passes my first two tests. There's no point in spending even \$10 on a domain if it doesn't have potential to make money for you. When registering your domains I highly recommend [Moniker](#). Moniker is a domain registrar made especially for Domainers. They've never lost a domain and their technical support is outstanding so once you find the domains you want to register and develop, [Moniker](#) should be the first place you go!



DOMAIN MONETIZATION: STEP 3

CONTENT IS KING

In the SEO world content has been and will always be king - and for good reason! Search engines like Google and Yahoo are always looking for accurate fresh content. Writing good content for every single domain you develop is the key to successful monetization. Using duplicate content or providing inaccurate information will almost certainly undermine your monetization efforts.

There is no way to auto-generate good content, you have to either write it yourself or hire someone to write content for you. This is the critical step that causes most new Domainers to shy-away from monetization. You mean I have to write?

I always recommend that new Domainers write their own content - this saves money and also helps you learn some of the basics of SEO. Unique, keyword-rich content coupled with a strong domain name is the key to ranking well in Google and Yahoo.

Don't be fooled by anyone that tells you that RSS feeds or license-free articles can get you top-rankings - if you want to make money monetizing your domains good content is a must. You can learn all the basics of SEO by reading my personal favorite - the [SEO Book](#).

If you aren't much of a writer yourself there are literally thousands of great writers online looking for work. One of the best places to start is a site like [oDesk.com](#) which makes it very easy to find content-writers that meet your exact quality standards. This is also a great site for managing your projects so you can easily coordinate with your team. To hire a writer just follow this link - [Hire A Writer On oDesk](#).

Whether you write your own content or pay someone else to do it for you always make sure to use the top 3-5 related keywords in your niche several times in each article. Anchor-text links to other domains you own is a great way to create inbound links as well as provide even further SEO benefits.

Always remind yourself - "Content Is King" and put the most time and/or money into this step - next to the domain name itself this is the most important part of your monetization strategy. Without good content you can't rank well, if you don't rank well you won't get visitors - and no visitors means no revenue!

DOMAIN MONETIZATION: STEP 4

USE WORDPRESS TO DEVELOP YOUR DOMAINS WITHOUT WRITING A LINE OF CODE

Wordpress is as popular blogging platform that also very conveniently lends-itself to rapid website design. Wordpress is easy to install and use, and best of all you don't have to write a single line of code so no previous experience is required!

If you haven't used Wordpress before you'll be happy to know the learning curve is very small and by doing a quick Google search for "learn Wordpress" you can quickly pick-up the basics.



To run Wordpress you'll need a basic hosting account. I would highly recommend [HostGator](#) which offers hosting for as low as \$4.95/month. [HostGator](#) also has a great Control Panel interface that makes installing and configuring Wordpress a breeze.

Wordpress allows you to easy create great-looking websites by picking professionally-designed Themes. Picking a good theme can make a big difference and I'd suggest investing in a few themes to get started. Below are a few of my favorite places to get great-looking Wordpress themes:



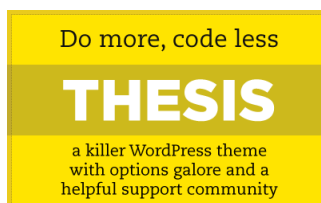
[Woo Themes](#)

Woo Themes has themes that not only look great but are also unbelievably easy to configure and manage. Geared towards a more novice user, Woo Themes is one of the best places to start if you're just getting-into the world of Wordpress.



[Theme Forest](#)

Theme forest has a larger selection than Woo Themes and can oftentimes be cheaper if you want to buy a single theme. That being said, some of the themes do have some quirks that require a bit of monkeying-around with the code. If you don't know HTML, CSS, and PHP this might not be the best option for you.



[Thesis](#)

Thesis is oftentimes considered to be the grand-daddy of all Wordpress themes. While I wouldn't recommend it for new Wordpress users, once you've got your feet wet you'll quickly find that this is the best theme out there - period.



[Studiopress](#)

Studiopress makes a mix of great-looking and just mediocre-looking themes. While there are a few excellent theme choice you'll have to choose wisely. Woo Themes definitely has far more high-quality themes and almost no bad-looking themes.



[Affiliate Theme](#)

Affiliate Theme was designed specifically for affiliate marketers. For sites where you use affiliate marketing as your main monetization strategy this theme is an excellent choice. It has a lot of configuration options so can be a bit overwhelming for novice Wordpress users.

You can't go wrong picking a theme from one of these five companies. Once you pick your theme you immediately have a nice looking site - no coding necessary. Add-in your fresh, unique, keyword-rich content and you suddenly have something that search engines are interested in! Add at least one article a month to keep your site fresh and let search engines know you're alive!

As your search engine ranking improves you'll start to see more and more visitors to your domain. The final step is to covert those visitors to revenue - onwards to step five!

DOMAIN MONETIZATION: STEP 5

MONETIZATION

Now for the fun part - converting your traffic to revenue. The word Monetization has money in it for a reason! First let me dispel a few myths:

- Monetization means putting PPC ads on domains

***Incorrect!** PPC is rarely the best way to monetize a domain name - affiliate marketing and lead generation are two techniques that can help you get significantly more revenue from your traffic than parking or PPC.*

- I can't pick the ads that go on my domains

***Incorrect!** Only with PPC are you restricted to letting ad servers pick your ads. With affiliate marketing you can pick exactly which ads, products, or forms appear on your site. If one ad isn't working you can swap it out with another one - try doing that with PPC!*

- I have to know HTML and PHP to put ads on my site

***Incorrect!** Every affiliate program and lead generation company will supply you with the code you need. All you have to do is copy and paste!*

Now that I've dispelled some common myths about monetization let me tell you the best ways to effectively monetize your traffic.

- Pretend you are a visitor to your site

What kind of things would you want to buy from your site? If you can't imagine a visitor buying something don't put it on your site. For example - if you have a website about Kayaking you might be able to sell books, compasses, and water-bottles but you're probably not going to sell full-sized kayaks from your site.

- Find an affiliate program that sells the products your visitor is looking for

There are hundreds of affiliate programs offering thousands of products for you to sell on your site. Pick products that have a good pay-out and strong track-record. Most of the top affiliate services will let you know how successful an ad is with other publishers.

- If a particular ad isn't working well - swap it out!

Don't be afraid to experiment a bit. You should be seeing a click-through rate above 5% on all your ads - if not you might want to try a different ad or potentially eliminate that slot if it isn't a good place for an ad on your site.

- Pay attention to analytics data

You should have a good understanding of the top three search terms that people use to get to your site. Ads should be directly relevant to what a majority of your visitors are looking for. [Google Analytics](#) is completely free and can provide you with this and much more information - once again no coding required!

So now that you know a few of the basics to picking the right ads it's time to setup an account with one of the top affiliate providers. I've listed a few of my favorite affiliate marketing companies - any of these would be an excellent choice to get started!



[Amazon Associates](#)

This is one of the easiest affiliate programs to get started with. The payouts aren't amazing but if you're new to affiliate marketing this is oftentimes the easiest service to start with. You can sell just about anything from the entire Amazon site or use banners to promote specific product categories.



[Commission Junction](#)

Commission Junction is one of the largest affiliate marketing companies in the world and as such they have a huge catalog of advertisers. With something for almost every category this is a service you'll want to have in your arsenal no matter what kind of domains you plan on monetizing.



[Azoogles Ads](#)

Azoogles is another great affiliate marketing company similar to Commission Junction. It's easy to get paired-up with your own account manager who can help you determine which ads are the best fits for your domains.



[ClickBank](#)

ClickBank is the leading marketplace for e-products. This means e-book, e-courses, you name it - it's on ClickBank. Many of the books can pay north of \$20/sale making ClickBank a great option and usually a good add-on to your existing monetization strategy.



[PepperJam](#)

PepperJam is a good fit for Domainers with sites that get a very high-volume of traffic. While PepperJam is not as open as Amazon, ClickBank, or Commission Junction, they do have some great ways to monetize your traffic - if you have enough to keep them interested!



[Kontera](#)

I really like Kontera because it intelligently adds links to your own content - delivering targeted ads to your visitors. While getting high-revenue sales should be your goal this can be a nice layer to add-into your existing monetization strategy.



Leadpile

Leadpile is a lead-generation network that helps you sell qualified leads from your domains. The focus here is credit and debt which are the most lucrative areas for lead generation. If you have a domain in this niche and you're getting traffic you might want to trade-up to Leadpile which could offer you over \$15 for each visitor that simply fills-out a form on your site!

CONCLUSION

Congratulations! If you've made it this far then you now understand the five steps to successfully monetize your domains. You understand that your domains MUST pass the test in step 2 before you even think of developing them! Also - you can now easily build a great-looking site and connect buyers with compelling products directly targeted to them - hand-picked by you!

I've taught you how to use free tools like the Google Adwords Keyword Tool and Google Analytics to understand search volume and CPC as well as better-understand how visitors get to your site.

You know the best places to buy great-looking, easy-to-use Wordpress themes, and you can deck-out those themes with some excellent monetization options using one or more of the services listed in Step 5.

The steps to succeed have just been given to you - the next step is yours to take. You will get-out of monetization what you put-into it. If you build one site a month (twelve sites a year) you can expect to have a small but growing income. If you get more aggressive and build-out five or more sites a month you will be much more satisfied with the results.

Not every site you build will be an overnight success. It's power in numbers and you'll quickly learn that 20% of your sites are responsible for 80% of your revenue. Your goal should be to balance this out as much as possible by adding more great sites to your repertoire. Don't get too hung-up on one site, the time you spend perfecting it you could be better spent on building-out more potential money-makers!

Write great content, provide accurate information, and give your visitors the products and services they are looking for. Be patient and don't expect to get rich overnight - this is by no means a get-rich-quick scheme. Instead this is a great way to develop a steady passive income of hundreds or thousands of dollars a month. Just think - even if you only generate \$500/month, what difference would that make in your life?

Welcome to the brave new world of virtual real estate - your passive income stream starts now!

Domain Services:

[Valuate](#)

[Moniker](#)

[Snapnames](#) (The best place to buy aftermarket domains and sell your own names)

Wordpress Themes:

[Woo Themes](#)

[Theme Forest](#)

[Thesis](#)

[Studiopress](#)

Affiliate Marketing:

[Amazon Associates](#)

[Commission Junction](#)

[Azoogle Ads](#)

[ClickBank](#)

[PepperJam](#)

[Kontera](#)

[Leadpile](#)

Further Reading:

[Domain Flipping](#) (my 100-page eBook on Domaining)

[SEO Book](#) (must-read for anyone learning SEO)

LINTON INVESTMENTS SERVICES

My company, [Linton Investments](#), offers development services for domain investors looking to make a passive income with their domains. We apply the same techniques described in this guide to evaluate your portfolio and determine which domains have the best monetization potential.

From there we have several development options:

1-Page Static HTML Site

This is a great way to improve an existing domain that you've had stuck at a parking service. By adding affiliate products and higher-paying ads to your domain along with a page of keyword-rich content you can expect to watch your revenue grow overnight!

5-Page Static HTML Site

Our most popular solution and the exact-same solution we use on a majority of our domains, the 5-Page Static HTML site is built to rank well and monetize effectively. With three forms of monetization at the minimum you can expect to get the maximum revenue per visitor. Unlike Wordpress sites, static HTML sites don't need to be updated as often in order to rank well.

Special Reader Discount: 25%-Off Your First Order Of 5+ Sites
[CLICK HERE TO REDEEM](#) (use coupon code DM101)

5-Page Wordpress Site

This is the exact site we explain creating in this guide. Along with setting-up and installing Wordpress for you we'll have our expert content-writers create five pages of keyword rich content custom-tailored to your site. A professional designer will then create a custom logo and header for your site instantly turning your domain into a brand. We also install some of the most useful and critic plugins to optimize Wordpress and keep it secure.

Master Site

With twenty pages of keyword rich content custom-written for your site, the Master Site is designed to out-rank the competition. Our team analyzes competitive sites and designs an SEO strategy to help you out-rank them and get more visitors to your domain than ever before. A professional logo and header design is included to make sure your brand has a strong presence online.

Product Portal

If you have a product-related domain we can help you sell that product directly from your site. Our product portals are build on the Amazon Store platform allowing you to sell almost anything Amazon has for sale! Along with products available for sale, our content team also custom-crafts five keyword-rich articles to help you rank well and get in front of your target customer.

Special Reader Discount: 25%-Off Your First Order Of 5+ Sites
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Consulting

If you've enjoyed this free guide but feel that a bit of one-on-one coaching could really help-out I'd be happy to talk with you directly. I've been consulting with new domain investors for over two years now and have helped countless investors get started the RIGHT way in this industry.

There are a lot of costly mistakes that many new investors make. I can help you avoid these mistakes and focus on what matters most - revenue.

My consulting services are available via telephone or video-conference and start at one-hour in length. To book a consultation please contact me - make sure to mention my book, you might just get a nice discount on your first session!

[Schedule A Consultation With Morgan](#)