

Have an Itch for a Writer's Niche? by Tedric Garrison



You've been writing for ten years, and someone asks, "What's your niche?" Do you know what to say? If you respond, "I write articles," or "short stories," or "novels," you just answered wrong. These are all types of writing or categories that you write in. A writer's niche is usually defined as: "a distinct segment of the writing market." The key word being, "distinct."

So, with that definition in mind, if you say, "I write photography articles," while that is better, it's not great. If you say, "I write articles about taking photography portraits," that's actually pretty good. But if you say, "I write articles about taking baby portraits with your camera," you just hit the jackpot! Ding, ding, ding. Confetti falls from the sky. That's your niche.

So why does it need to be that specific? I can think of two reasons. First, (if taking baby portraits is what you do) nobody is likely to ask you to take underwater photos or skydiving photos. The second is much more important. Your neighbour or best friend has a new baby, and their first thought is, "I know the perfect person to take those pictures."

Now some may argue, but I don't want to limit myself, that's why I take pictures of everything, or why I write about everything. That's OK, but when someone asks you the question, "what is your niche?" you need to man up and say, I don't have one. I do a lot of different photography, or I do a lot of different writing. That's OK, you are not a bad person if you don't have a specific niche. But...

If you have a bleeding ulcer, do you go to a foot doctor or a surgeon? If you have a \$150,000.00 Lamborghini, do you go to a general mechanic or a specialist? If you want to invest in stocks, do you go to a stockbroker or the janitor who works at Wall Street? Well, maybe, but you get a general idea.



As a writer, most of you are familiar with the idea of branding. Do you want to be known as a jack of all trades and master of none? Let's take Stephen King as an example. He is known as the master of suspense or the king of terror, and that's a good thing. That's his specialty. He also writes about writing, he may even write about gardening (don't quote me), but that's not the point, he is well known, mainly in part because of his niche.



Let's say you are a photographer and you want to get more business, so you build a website. After a few months, you notice no difference, so you think I need to get more traffic to my site. You start to write photography articles that link back to your site. After a few months, your site is doing great, but you still have no business. What went wrong?

You wrote articles about portraits, parts of the camera, sports photography, landscape photography, the Zone system and more. Therein lies your problem. You proved you know about photography, but you still have no niche. The people you attracted to your site were interested in photography, NOT what your photography could do for them.

Having an area of expertise gives them a reason to use you, as their photographer. Isn't that the real goal? Do you want to be known as just a writer? Or do you want to be known as the writer who writes romantic time travel adventure novels that have family values? Now, that's a niche. But you have to decide what your niche is before you can become famous for it. Don't be scared to commit. Give yourself a better chance to succeed. Find your niche.



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Award-winning writer/photographer Tedric Garrison has 40 years experience in both areas of expertise. As a Graphic Art Major, he has a unique perspective on the Elements of Design and how they relate to photography. His photo eBook; Finding Your Creative Edge in Photography proves creativity CAN be taught. Tedric shares both his writing and photography skills at his new website:

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