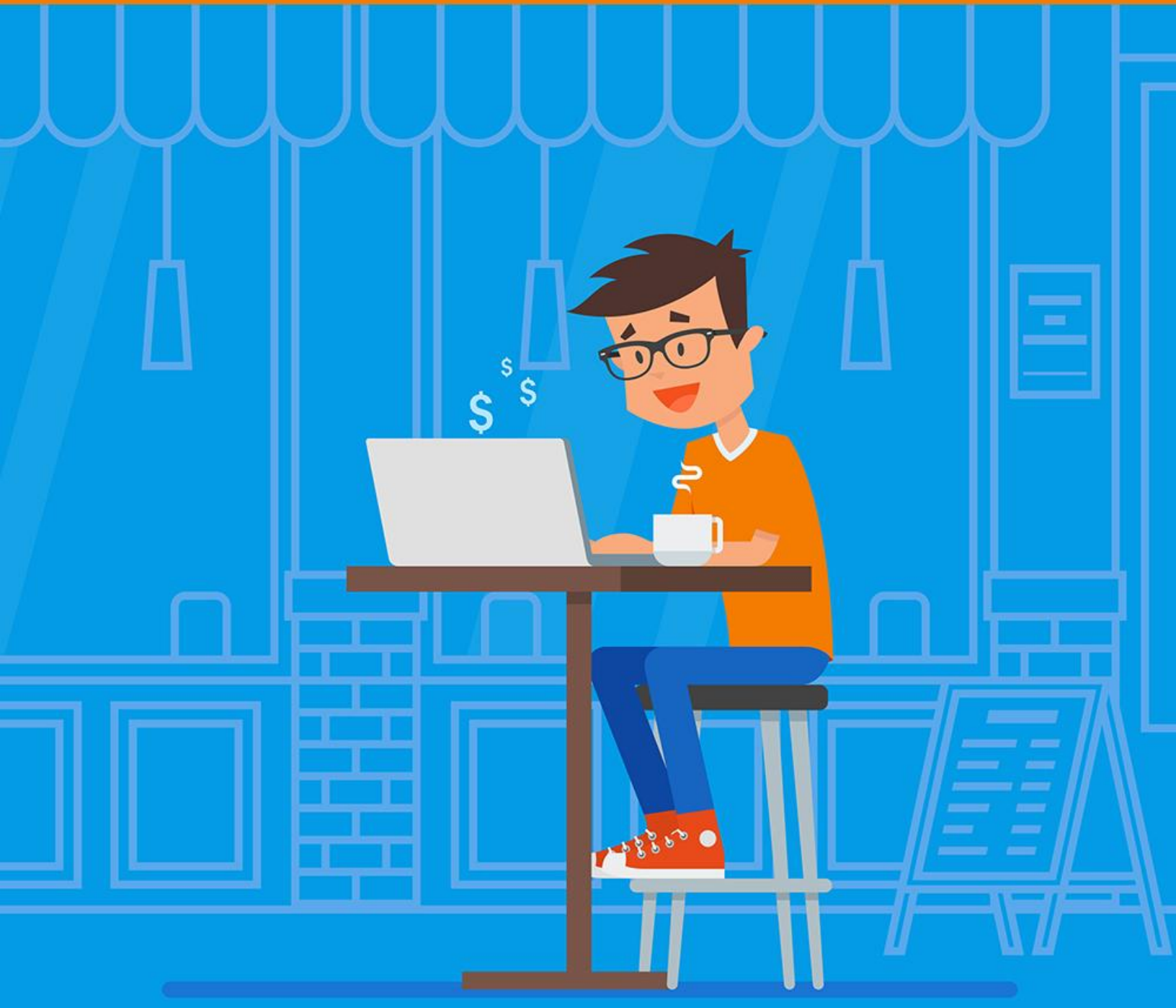


FREELANCE DESIGNER INCOME

LEARN THE SECRETS OF MAKING MONEY FREELANCING!



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Introduction

Making money online has gotten tougher in recent years. Google has made it so that only large websites with tons of backlinks and long, high-quality content typically rank well in the most competitive niches. Unless you are already established, it's a lot of work to make money with blogs and websites.

But there's one easy way to take advantage of the current climate, and that is to offer your services as a freelance designer!

Offering services is a great way to make money without having to compete with millions of other websites in a single market, and without having to spend huge amounts of money on ads. In fact, you don't need a single penny to get started as long as you already have a computer, internet connection, and some basic design software. (Even if you don't, there are workarounds. For example, you can rent a pretty decent laptop or desktop computer from a place like Aaron's, use free internet at a library or coffee shop, and rent software through Adobe Creative Cloud for a few bucks per month.)

You don't even have to have great design skills. It's possible to make decent money as a designer with little to no existing skill. Just watch a few tutorial videos on YouTube, and you'll be creating basic graphics in no time! You can always move into more complex designs as your skills progress.

Ready to learn how to make money as a designer? Let's begin.

Getting Started

Before you can make money as a freelance designer, there are a few things you must have. If you're reading this, you probably already have all of these, or at least most of them. If not, we'll talk about a few ways to get what you need without spending thousands of dollars upfront.

Here's what you need, at minimum:

1. ***A Decent Computer*** – You can't get away with using a computer with very low specs, unfortunately. Today's graphics software packages all use considerable resources, so using a 10-year-old laptop with 4 GB of memory just isn't going to work.
2. ***Decent Internet*** – Again, you can't use really slow internet and expect to do well. Graphic files are often quite large, and a very slow connection is going to frustrate you very quickly. You need at least a 3 Mbps connection to be productive.
3. ***Design Software*** – Adobe Photoshop is highly recommended, as there is more support in the form of tutorials, add-ons, etc.

So what if you're missing part of these things? Let's talk about some of the ways you can get access to the things you need to get started.

Computer

It's imperative to have a decent computer if you want to design graphics, because most software packages used by designers require a

lot of system resources to function properly. You'll need a decent processor, at least 6-8 GB of memory, and a good graphics card, at minimum.

It's also helpful to have a larger hard drive, as the files you'll need to store on it will often be quite large. However, you can get around this requirement by either using an external hard drive to store a lot of your files, or using cloud storage like Dropbox.

Getting a decent computer doesn't necessarily have to mean spending hundreds of dollars upfront. A lot of people can't afford to buy a new computer outright.

Financing is probably your best option, but keep in mind that if you don't have great credit, you'll end up paying a lot more for your computer, because interest charges on options that don't require good credit are usually very high.

A lot of places will help you finance a computer without great credit. Here are a few places to consider:

>> <http://www.aarons.com>

>> <http://www.hhgregg.com>

>> <http://www.rentacenter.com>

>> <http://www.leaseville.com>

Remember to choose a computer that has good specs, because it's not going to be effective to have a computer that won't run the software you need to use.

Internet

Not everyone has access to fast internet where they live. There are still a lot of dead zones in the world, and sometimes it's just not affordable to have internet, even if it is accessible where you live. Fast internet can often cost \$100 per month, or more, and if there are no affordable options where you live, you may think you can't make money as a freelancer.

Fortunately, there are some options available to you even if you don't live in an area with access to fast, affordable internet.

The first option is using mobile internet. If you have a cellphone, you may be able to use it as a personal hotspot in order to access the internet from your computer. You simply log into the hotspot as you would WiFi, or connect via Bluetooth. Sometimes you can even connect to your phone's hotspot by plugging your phone into your computer.

If you don't have a phone that has a hotspot feature, you may be able to get a dedicated hotspot device through your cellphone carrier. Many carriers offer these small devices, and you can often connect several devices to a single hotspot. Of course, you'll have to be careful about how much bandwidth you use, as mobile bandwidth is often quite expensive, and even "unlimited" plans are never truly unlimited.

The second option is to use the internet at a place like a local college, library, coffee shop, or restaurant. Many places have free WiFi these days, although some do require a small purchase to be able to use it. Even very rural areas usually have some kind of free internet option.

Software

Okay, software is a bit trickier, because aside from theft (which I obviously do NOT condone), there's no way to really get the type of software you need for free.

You could try to get by using free alternatives, but keep in mind that there won't be as much support for free software. If you look for tutorials and add-ons, there just isn't likely to be anywhere near the variety you'd find for software like Adobe Photoshop.

If you insist on using free software, I recommend GIMP:

>> <https://www.gimp.org/>

As far as free graphics software, GIMP is the most powerful option, and has the most support of any free program.

If you're looking for power and support, Photoshop is the way to go. Fortunately, you no longer have to shell out hundreds of dollars upfront to buy the software. You can simply get onto a monthly plan through the Adobe Creative Cloud program. Yes, it's still relatively pricey, but for software this powerful and with the potential to make you as much money as this one, it's well worth it.

You can get Photoshop (with Lightroom) for \$9.99 per month, or you can pay \$49.99 per month to get all 20+ Adobe apps, including Photoshop, Illustrator, Dreamweaver, Premier Pro and more.

>> <https://creative.adobe.com/plans>

There's also special pricing for students, so if you happen to have a student ID card, you can get a better monthly price. For example, students can get the \$49.99 plan for just \$29.99.

This is a significant investment, but you can always start with the \$9.99 plan for access to Photoshop and upgrade later. The basic plan will be fine when you're just getting started, unless you plan to also offer video editing or logo creation, in which case you'd need other apps like Premier and Illustrator.

Types of Designers

Before you actually start offering your design services, it's important to decide what type of design you want to specialize in. It's never a good idea to just offer "design". You'll scare clients off if they don't see a solid portfolio of experience in the type of design they're looking for.

Take a look at some different graphic design portfolios. You'll see that nearly every designer specializes in something.

For example:

- Ecover and minisite design for internet marketing
- Kindle book cover design
- Logo creation
- Banners and other marketing materials
- Print designs (brochures, business cards, flyers, menus, etc.)
- Social media designs
- Infographics

You can always offer additional services along with whatever you specialize in, but it's important to make your name in a specific genre of design.

Let's say you specialize in designing logos. You could offer other services such as banner design and print design, but you will make your name specifically as a logo designer.

This is important, because if someone is looking for a logo designer, they want to go to someone who has a lot of experience specifically in

logo design. If they come to your site and see a mishmash of different types of graphics, they will probably look elsewhere. They'll assume you don't have enough experience designing logos. The same thing goes for someone looking for banners, or print, or anything else. They'll just assume you don't have enough experience **specifically** in what they are looking for, even if you do.

It's the same reason most people don't order a hamburger in a Mexican restaurant, or a pizza at a burger joint. They just assume it won't be as good there as the cuisine that restaurant specializes in.

For this reason, pick one specific area of design you'd like to focus in. Ideally, this will be an area you do have experience in, one you enjoy working in, and one that has some way to easily find clients. For example, print is often difficult to find work in, because clients are often spread out. They don't hang out in specific places. However, it's relatively easy to find work designing book covers, because you can just go to various websites, forums, and blogs that authors visit.

Your Portfolio

The single most important element of getting work as a designer is having a good portfolio of design examples to show potential clients. In the beginning, especially if you don't actually have a lot of design experience, you won't have a large portfolio. Fortunately, you don't need a huge portfolio—you just need a good one.

Your work probably won't be on par with the best of the best at first, and that's fine, too. There's demand for inexpensive design just as there's a demand for high-end, professional design. You can always raise prices as your skill improves.

The easiest way to create a portfolio is using WordPress. You'll need your own hosting to really make it stunning, because you can't use all the really great custom themes and plugins on WordPress.com.

If you need inexpensive hosting, you can try options like:

>> <http://www.hostgator.com>

>> <https://www.namecheap.com/hosting/shared.aspx>

>> <http://www.coolhandles.com/>

Be sure to look for coupons before you sign up, as many hosting companies provide discounts for new customers to bring in business. These types of hosts generally cost from \$5 to \$15 per month, and may offer bigger discounts if you pay for 6-12 months in advance.

If you need to build a portfolio when you're just starting out, you might want to offer free, or at least heavily discounted, designs to a few clients. This way, you can get testimonials in addition to building your portfolio. You might also make a little money by offering these heavy discounts.

The theme you choose for your portfolio should be one that is relatively simple and showcases your designs, NOT the design of the site itself. Unless you want to specialize in building websites, choose a theme that looks neat and clean and shows off your designs—not one that distracts from them.

Some great places to find themes include:

>> <http://www.mythemeshop.com>

>> <http://www.elegantthemes.com>

>> <http://www.ithemes.com>

If you need ideas for what a great portfolio should look like, you can visit some of the top designers in your field and get some ideas from their websites, but you obviously don't want to copy. Just use them for inspiration.

You'll also want to include prices on your site, as well as a contact form or some other way to get in touch with you. Make it as easy as possible for prospective clients to contact you for quotes, or with questions.

Getting Work

Perhaps the hardest part of being a freelancer is finding work. In fact, you may spend more time **looking** for work in the beginning than you do actually creating graphics. This is normal, and eventually you'll develop a base of regular clients and you won't have to spend as much time looking for work. But in the beginning, you should be prepared to spend a lot of time beating the bushes, so to speak.

The best way to find work will depend on the type of work you've decided to specialize in, because different types of clients visit different types of websites when looking for designers.

Let's take a look at some of the different places you can go to find work, and which places are best for which types of design.

Forums

Forums can be a great place to find work, but you have to visit the right forums for whatever type of work you're doing. For example, if you're designing book covers, you'll want to visit forums that specifically target authors. If you're designing advertising material or other items for marketers, you'll want to visit webmaster forums.

If you're designing for print, you may have trouble finding work on forums, but you can find work on forums for most other types of design.

Freelance Sites

Freelance sites are a necessary evil in the world of design. They can consume crazy amounts of time, because you will probably spend countless hours wading through thousands of jobs and submitting proposals only to hear nothing back.

The main reason for this is simply the fact that there are far, far more freelancers than there are potential clients, and most of those clients know this, so they expect rock-bottom pricing. You'll eventually learn to spot the jobs posted by clients who are looking for quality and who are willing to pay a decent price for it, but at first, you'll spend a lot of time searching.

Here are some of the most popular freelance sites as of this writing:

>> <https://www.toptal.com/>

>> <http://www.upwork.com>

>> <https://www.flexjobs.com/>

>> <http://www.guru.com>

>> <http://www.crowded.com>

>> <http://www.freelancer.com>

>> <http://www.simplyhired.com>

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

Gig Sites

Pretty much everyone on the internet is familiar with gig sites like Fiverr. There are thousands of them these days, but Fiverr is still the reigning king. You'll find the most clients with the least hassle, but you may also realize there's a lot of competition. You'll have to set yourself apart from all the other designers by offering great, fast service and quality designs.

Remember, despite the name (Fiverr), you can actually sell at prices higher than \$5. For example, you can offer a basic book cover design for \$5 using only a single photo that is not manipulated in any way with basic text, and offer higher-priced "upgrades" that include more photos, more manipulation, and stylized text.

Classified Sites

Classified sites are a great place to find work. Despite sites like Craigslist having millions of users, there usually aren't all that many applicants to job postings. This means you have a lot less competition for the jobs posted than you might on a freelance site.

Now, it's not particularly easy to find jobs on sites like Craigslist, because most of these sites separate their sites into cities. That means you have to search each city separately in order to find jobs.

Also, many jobs, especially full-time jobs, only want people who have college degrees and live locally. But don't get discouraged! You can still find a good number of jobs that allow you to work at home. You just need to search for things like "freelance" and "telecommute".

Contests

If you want to improve your skill in between paying jobs, contests are a great way to do so while also offering you the potential of making some money. The odds of winning a particular contest are never great, because you'll be up against some stiff competition. However, you'll be able to practice your skill while still having at least a small chance of getting paid for it.

The most popular design contest website is:

>> <http://www.99designs.com>

Once you win a few contests and they show up in your 99 Designs account, you may have people contacting you privately for designs.

Conclusion

Even if you don't yet have a lot of experience as a designer, you can make money creating simple graphics for clients. There's a very high demand for specialized graphics like book covers and social media graphics, and these fields are wide open for freelancers looking to get started.

In the beginning, you'll probably need to keep your prices relatively low, and you may have a harder time finding work consistently, but if you keep at it, you'll quickly discover you'll build a client base that trusts you and comes to you on a regular basis. Don't give up!

Keep improving your skill. Keep building your portfolio. As you advance, you'll find it easier to get work, and you'll be able to increase your prices.

Designing graphics is one of the easiest ways to make money online, and it's practically guaranteed that you will make at least some money, even when you're just starting out. Unlike other methods, which can take months or even years to become profitable, designing can bring you money in pretty much from day one.

So get out there and get started, and I wish you the very best of luck in your new business!

Resources

Here are links to some of the resources found in this guide.

Finance a Computer:

>> <http://www.aarons.com>

>> <http://www.hhgregg.com>

>> <http://www.rentacenter.com>

>> <http://www.leaseville.com>

Graphics Software:

>> <https://www.gimp.org/>

>> <https://creative.adobe.com/plans>

Web Hosting:

>> <http://www.hostgator.com>

>> <https://www.namecheap.com/hosting/shared.aspx>

>> <http://www.coolhandles.com/>

WordPress Themes:

>> <http://www.mythemeshop.com>

>> <http://www.elegantthemes.com>

>> <http://www.ithemes.com>

Freelance Websites:

>> <https://www.toptal.com/>

>> <http://www.upwork.com>

>> <https://www.flexjobs.com/>

>> <http://www.guru.com>

>> <http://www.crowded.com>

>> <http://www.freelancer.com>

>> <http://www.simplyhired.com>

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