

# **The Helium Report:**

**How I Made \$1,044.28 in 45 Days  
Writing Part-Time  
and  
Created a Secondary Income Source**

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# INTRODUCTION

## About this report

This report shows you what I did to earn more than \$1,000 at [Helium](#) in just 45 days, writing 2 hours or less a day. It also shows you the potential for residual income, and how that initial time investment continues to pay off for years to come.

To get the most from this report, I recommend that you start with a cursory read-through. Look at the section headings, scan the tables and lists, and familiarize yourself with the layout. Once you've done this, come back to the beginning and read the report slowly, thinking about each section as you finish it. Make notes about the things that stick out to you, and write down action items – ways to put this information to practical use. Finally, visit my blog at <http://www.writing-journey.com> to get plenty of writing tips for Helium and for Internet writing in general.

## About me

Before I get into talking about Helium, you probably ought to know a little bit about me. I'm a 30-something professional Internet writer living in Linwood, Michigan. I've made a decent living for the last five years writing on the Internet. I've often said that I'm not the best writer online, but I'm far from the worst. I like to think of myself as slightly above average. Regardless, I'm at least good enough at it to pay my mortgage and feed my three kids. I also run a blog called [The Writing Journey](#).

## About The Writing Journey

You can find it at <http://www.writing-journey.com>. At The Writing Journey, my objective is to help other Internet writers to achieve their dreams. The report you are now reading is part of the way I am doing just that. I could easily keep all of this useful information to myself and, in the end, probably make much more money at Helium by doing so. I haven't done that, though. Why?

## Why I am writing this report

I am writing this report because I want to share my successes at Helium with you. I want you to be able to experience the same things that I have experienced. You see, I don't need Helium. I have plenty of freelance writing work on my plate. I like Helium, and I choose to write for Helium for specific reasons. I want to be able to encourage new Internet writers and find avenues for their success as well. Helium is one of those avenues. On top of that, though, I see the potential for long-term recursive income at Helium.

My motives aren't entirely altruistic. You see, when you [sign up for Helium](#) through a link I provide, I get a bonus equal to 5% of what you earn at Helium. That bonus doesn't affect your earnings in any way. I don't get anything if you don't make any money, though, so it really is good for both of us if you do well at Helium!

In addition, if you find this report useful, please visit my [Helium Report Web Page](#) and consider making a small donation today.

## How I make money at Helium

I have made money at Helium in several different ways, including:

- Writing contests
- The Marketplace
- Article performance
- Special promotions
- Referrals

Through the course of this report, I'll explore each of these ways and tell you exactly how it is that I [made more than \\$1,000](#) in 45 days writing just 2 hours a day for Helium.

Don't believe me? Here's proof from my PayPal account:

Payments Received from Jan. 12, 2008 to May 12, 2008									
Date	Type	To/From	Name/Email	Status	Details	Action	Gross	Fee	Net Amount
Apr. 18, 2008	Payment	From	Helium Exchange, Inc.	Completed	<a href="#">Details</a>		\$952.50 USD	\$0.00 USD	\$952.50 USD
Apr. 11, 2008	Payment	From	Helium Exchange, Inc.	Completed	<a href="#">Details</a>		\$68.46 USD	\$0.00 USD	\$68.46 USD

To get started writing at Helium today, follow this link to [sign up](#).

# ARTICLE DIRECTORIES – RECURSIVE INCOME AND CONTINUOUS EXPOSURE

## What is an article directory?

Think of an article directory as an online library that stores user-generated content. An article directory is a place where you publish your writing online. Examples of article directories include Helium, Associated Content, Constant Content, Triond and eHow. There are a number of benefits that come with submitting to an article directory.

## How a writer benefits from article directories

A writer benefits from article directories in two specific ways. First, you **make money** using article directories. This money usually comes from performance payments. Performance payments are a form of revenue sharing in which the article directory pays a portion of its advertising income to the article writer. Most article directories provide some type of performance payments, although the specifics of these payments can vary greatly. Some article directories pay based on the actual revenue that an article generates, whereas other directories pay based on page impressions (the number of times the article is viewed).

For example, here are my eHow earnings for the last several months, as of May 12:

The screenshot shows a browser window with the URL <http://forms.ehow.com/EarningsHistory.aspx>. The page title is 'Earnings by Month'. On the left, there is a sidebar with links: 'Earnings Center', 'Earnings by Month', 'Earnings by Article', 'Payment Info', 'My Earnings FAQ', and a 'WRITE AN ARTICLE' button. The main content is a table with the following data:

Earnings Center	Earnings Period	Total Earnings	Payment Status	Payment Issued
Earnings by Month	May 2008	\$1.72 USD	Period Active	\$0.00 USD
Earnings by Article	Apr 2008	\$2.85 USD	Carryover	\$0.00 USD
Payment Info	Mar 2008	\$2.48 USD	Carryover	\$0.00 USD
My Earnings FAQ	Feb 2008	\$0.54 USD	Carryover	\$0.00 USD
	Jan 2008	\$0.29 USD	Carryover	\$0.00 USD
	Totals to Date	\$7.88 USD	--	\$0.00 USD

Keep in mind that we're talking about five articles, two of which make no money because they're in a specific niche that isn't popular at eHow (roleplaying games). It took me all of about an hour and a half to write all five. My earnings continue to increase on those five articles every month. Now, \$7.88 isn't much for five articles. It's less than the famous \$2 articles you can buy on Scriptlance. However, if my earnings stay the same or rise, those five articles will earn me \$25 a year *indefinitely*. Are the pennies I earned in January insulting? To some, maybe. However, I believe in the power of compound effects. Just like money in the bank, those pennies are going to grow and grow. Unlike money in the bank, those pennies are increasing at a high percentage, too.

You gain a second benefit from submitting to an article directory. Placing articles into an article directory helps you **promote a blog or website**. The article directory provides links back to your website, either within the articles you write or from an "About Me" page at the article directory. On my blog, [The Writing Journey](#), I've had more than 170 unique visitors from my 30 articles on EzineArticles.com in the last month, plus that many over again from sites where those EzineArticles.com posts have been republished. That's

300 unique visitors, who have a bounce rate comparable to visitors I get from guest posts. In other words, they tend to be quality, repeat users, and I retain around a third as subscribers.

## How does Helium differ from other article directories?

Helium is vastly different from most other article directories. For one, Helium provides writers with **multiple opportunities to earn money**. In addition to performance payments, Helium allows writers to compete in weekly writing contests, to submit articles to publishers in the marketplace, and to participate in special promotions. While other directories may have one or two of these opportunities, only Helium utilizes them all.

What are you waiting for? [Sign up](#) at Helium today.

# WRITING AT HELIUM

## Getting great ratings at Helium

There really isn't a secret to getting your articles rated to the top on Helium, no magic formula, no trick to it. Getting your articles rated to the top on Helium is about one thing and one thing only:

### Quality.

I write articles that, consistently, rate in the top 25% of the topic. Why is it? Am I a great writer, more talented than everyone else who writes on Helium?

Nope. There are many writers who are more talented on Helium, many of whom wind up with articles rated lower than mine. The difference is just that I'm committed to, and even fanatical about, my article quality.

What is article quality at Helium? There are some basic characteristics of quality articles that will get them rated to the top. These are:

- Grammar. You have to know where commas go and how to use them. You have to avoid run-on sentences. You have to use punctuation correctly. You have to write in complete sentences. These are just some of the most common grammatical errors I've seen at Helium. Learning to use the rules of the English language improves your ratings.
- Spelling. Spelling is more than just getting words spelled correctly. Spelling also includes using homonyms correctly. For example, your spell checker isn't going to tell you that in "They ate they're dinner," the word "they're" is the wrong word. You have to do your basic spell-checking, but then you also have to proofread the article yourself to find these sorts of errors.

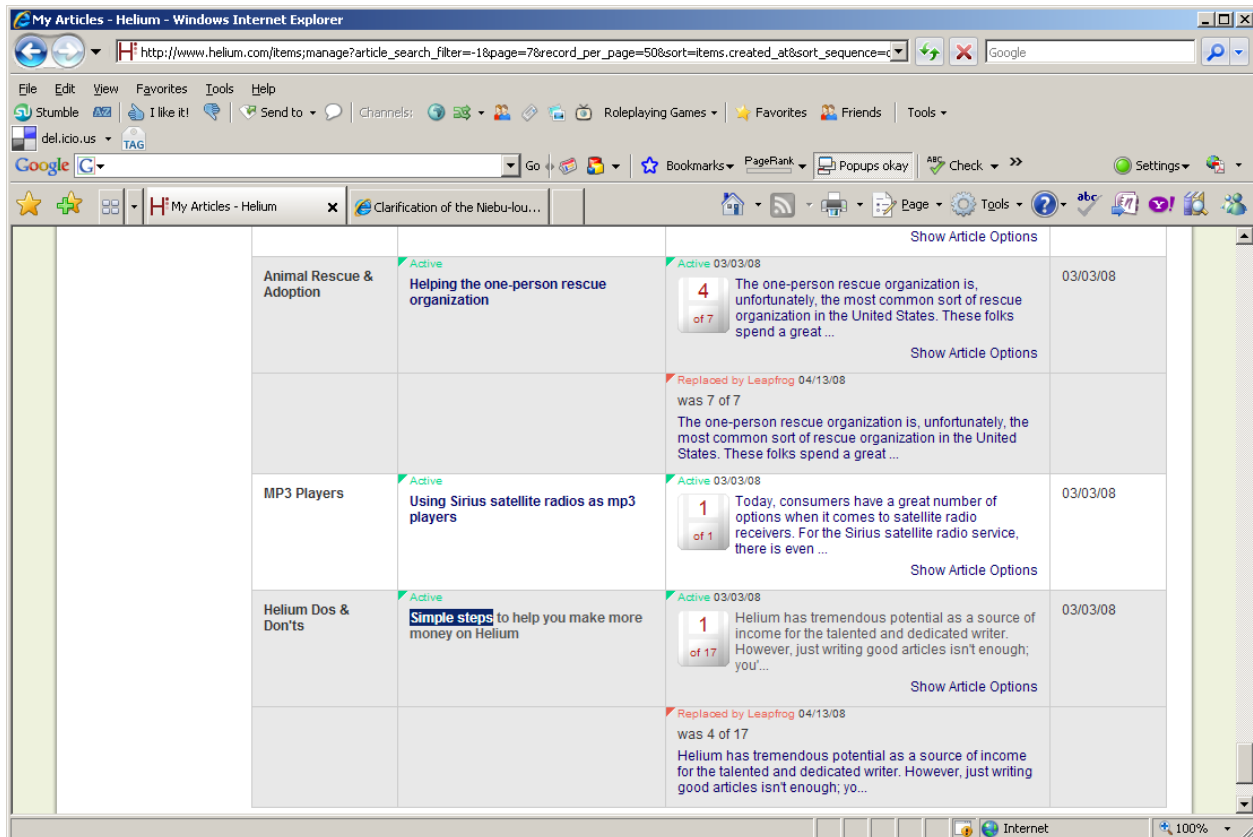
- **Formatting.** One of the most frustrating things when rating articles is being unable to follow the writer's argument because the formatting distracts you. Putting an extra line break in between paragraphs, avoiding "all caps" whenever possible, and using numbered or bullet-point lists all greatly improve formatting issues.
- **Content.** Content is king on the Internet, and this is as true at Helium as it is anywhere else. If your content stinks because you can't stay on topic or because you don't have true knowledge of what you are writing about, your article is going to be rated to the bottom.

There are other things, no doubt, that you can do to get your articles rated to the top. However, mastering these four quality-related concepts has to be your first step toward getting higher ratings.

## When to use the Leapfrog feature

Another element that makes Helium different from other article directories is the Leapfrog feature. The Leapfrog feature allows you to change an article after you publish it. Once you make your changes, other Helium users rate your revised article against your original article. The higher-rated of the two stays, and the lower-rated one disappears.

Leapfrog is especially useful when you have an article that just doesn't seem to rate highly. In my case, low-rated articles usually have some slight editing problem. I can leapfrog the article, fix the problem, and find that my article will jump up into that top 25% that I'm used to.



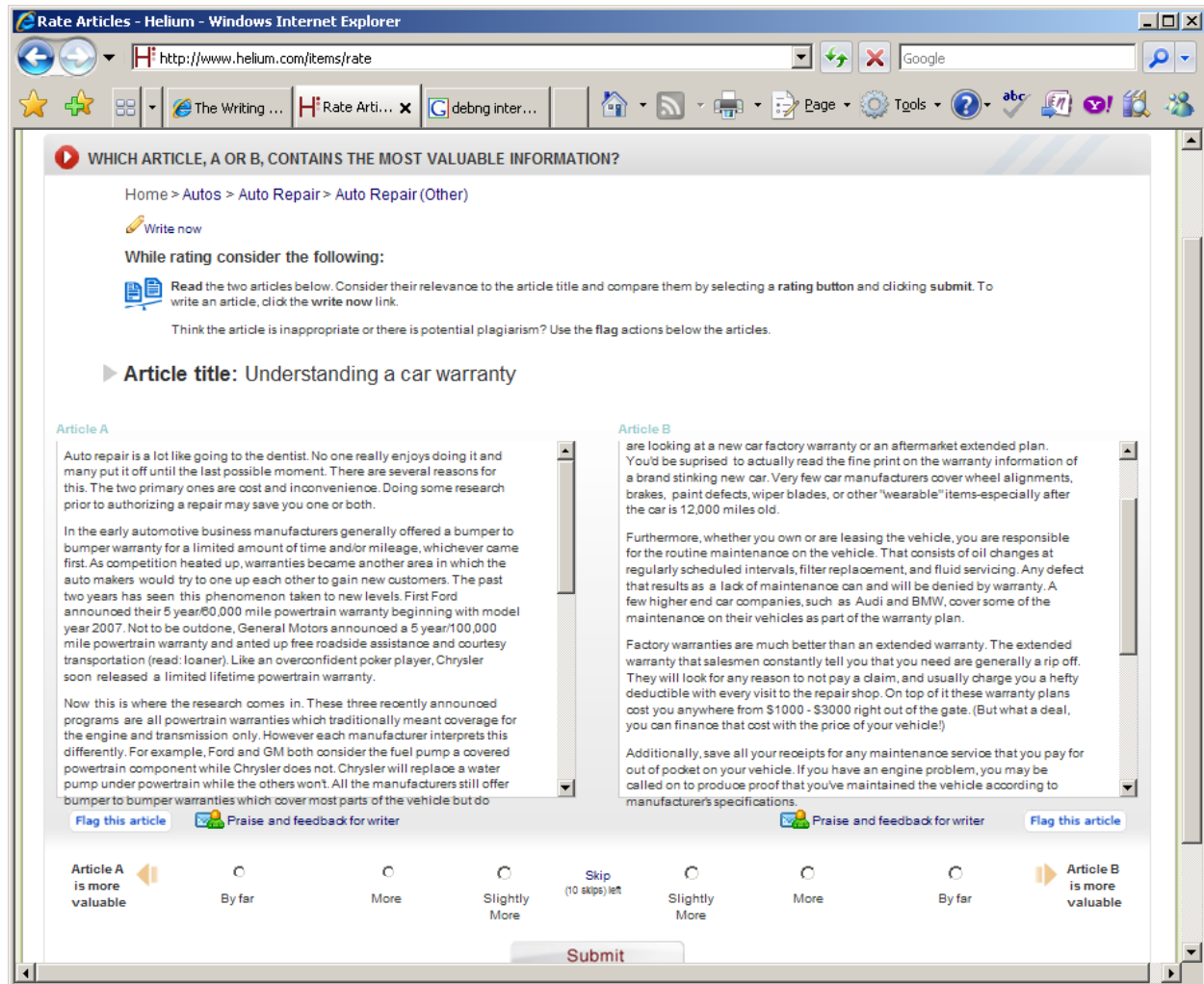
You can see here where I've boosted two of my articles using Leapfrog.

## Higher ratings don't necessarily equal higher pay

There is one factor regarding ratings that is worth mentioning. High ratings are primarily beneficial in *contests*. Ratings are irrelevant to the money you earn in the Marketplace and to recursive earnings. This isn't to say that high ratings mean failure for the Marketplace or recursive earnings, just that there isn't always a direct correlation between ratings and how much money you make in those areas.

## WHY RATING IS IMPORTANT

Rating is another way that Helium differs from other article directories. The ratings process works like this: When you click on “Rate,” or after you submit an article, Helium takes you to the ratings screen. The ratings screen looks like this:



Here, you compare two different articles, all the while asking the question, “Which contains the most valuable information?” You have the option to offer praise or feedback to the writers, flag the article for plagiarism, grammar,

formatting, relevance or length problems, and to actually rate one article higher than another.

## **The Helium rating system helps improve your writing skills**

Peer review is one of the best ways to improve your writing. At Helium, many other writers review your writing. Some will send you positive feedback, and others will tell you how your articles can improve. Even if you don't receive specific messages, you can compare an article that rates higher with an article that doesn't rate as high to see where your weaknesses might be.

## **The Helium rating system helps improve your editing skills**

All Internet writers need to work on their proofreading skills, especially when it comes to proofreading their own writing. I use the rating system at Helium to practice my own editing skills, watching for grammar, spelling and word-use issues especially. I have learned to speed-proofread by rating at Helium, as well, and to ignore the content itself while I look for proofreading errors. In my mind, at least, validating my content is very different from checking for grammatical issues.

## **Flagging articles at Helium**

The flagging tool is an important part of the rating process at Helium. The flagging tool allows you to do a number of things, from reporting plagiarism to letting the author know about a formatting or grammatical issue. The question, then, is when you should flag and when you should not.

## When you should flag

- **Plagiarism.** If you find that someone has copied an article from another source on the Internet, you should flag the article. It is possible that the other website where the article appears belongs to the author. By flagging the article, however, you ask Helium to follow up on the issue, saving you from doing the investigative work.
- **Formatting.** If an article is so poorly formatted as to be unreadable, you should flag it. In many cases, authors may be grateful, as it provides them the information they need to fix the formatting problems.
- **Grammar.** If you find one or two grammatical errors in an article, you probably don't need to flag it. If there are more than half a dozen or so, you are doing the author a favor by pointing them out.
- **Off Topic.** It is not uncommon to find a Helium article that just doesn't seem to fit the topic for which it is written. Flagging the article helps to put the writer on track and helps Helium readers find the information they are looking for.
- **Length.** If an article is below the 400-word minimum length, Helium needs to know about it. Part of the way that Helium ensures the quality of the site is by getting rid of substandard articles that just don't cover the topic sufficiently.
- **Profanity.** Helium has a specific policy on profanity, and you should flag such articles accordingly.

## When you should not flag

- You don't like the writer's style. As long as the article is grammatically correct, it isn't up to you to try to fix the writer's style. If the writer has an ineffective style, she will be able to figure it out soon enough.
- You disagree with the writer's thesis. Your opinion on the topic is irrelevant to your rating the article. Always remember that. This is why

Helium won't let you rate articles on the side of a debate you disagree with.

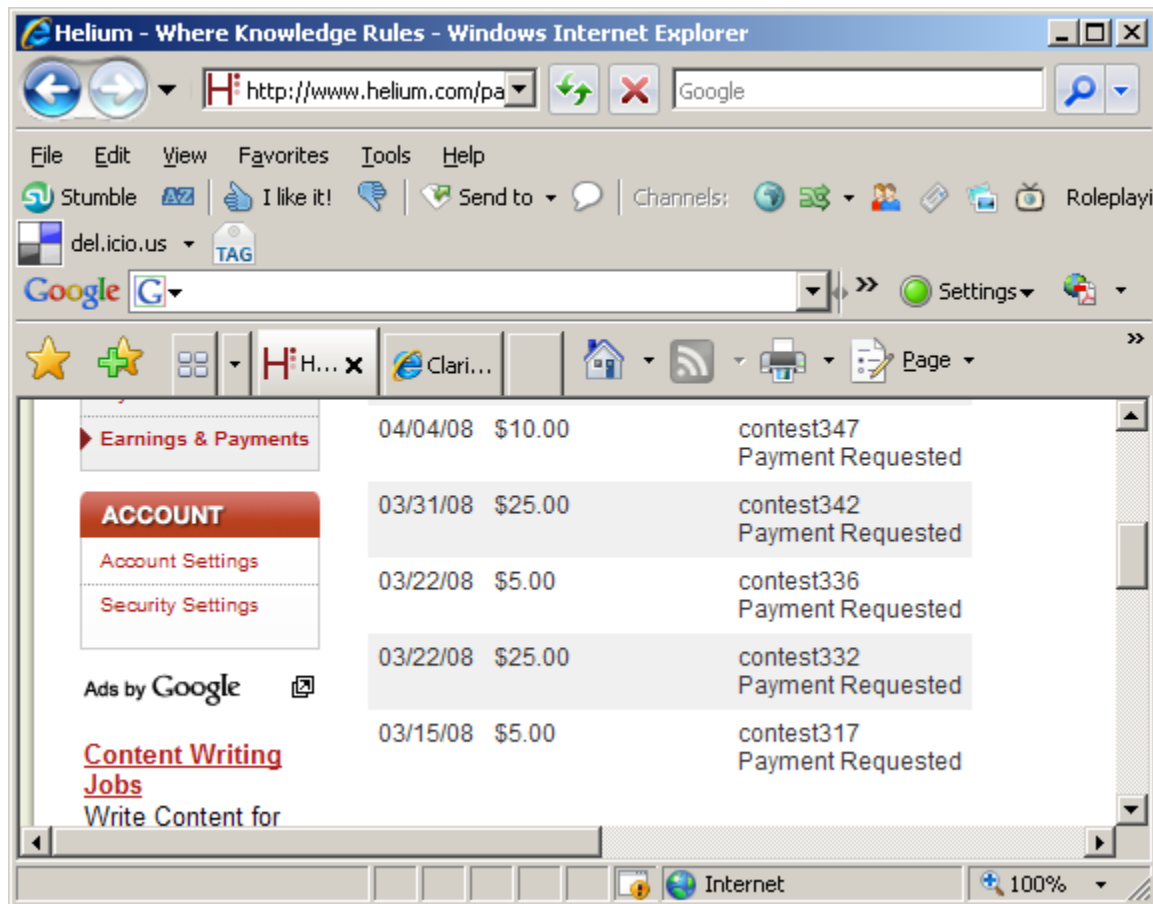
- Formatting problems that cannot be fixed. Because Helium does not currently allow HTML formatting in its articles, sometimes things just don't look right. Unfortunately, there's nothing that you or the writer can do about it.
- When in doubt, feel free to flag. The flagging tool is part of what makes Helium great. It provides writers with reasons why their article isn't succeeding and thereby helps them to succeed in the long run.

## A word about plagiarism

Helium, in my experience, takes plagiarism seriously. I've flagged more than 30 different Helium users for plagiarism, and nearly all of them have been removed. The couple of users who haven't been banned were merely using a pen name.

Flagging is one way to report plagiarism. I've found that when an article in a contest is plagiarized, though, the fastest way to get the article removed is to send an e-mail to the helpdesk ([help@helium.com](mailto:help@helium.com)). Jim at the helpdesk is quick and efficient and deals with plagiarism with a heavy hand.

## MAKING MONEY AT HELIUM WITH CONTESTS



Some of my contest payments. Contests can be the most exciting (and stressful!) experiences writing at Helium.)

### Combined research

One of the secrets to making money on Helium is optimizing your research time. This means that, if you need to do research for one article, you may as well turn it instead into four articles. The Helium contests are the perfect place for this. For example, I wrote a series of articles for a contest on Simulation Games. I wrote in topics specific to flight simulators, such as “History of Flight Simulation Games” and “The Best Flight Simulation Games.” There were six or so articles I was able to write from about 30 minutes of good research.

## Using the system to your advantage

There are a number of ways that other Helium users have tried to “game the system” and use the contest rating system to their advantage. When you Leapfrog, for example, your article goes from its current position to the middle of the pack. If you Leapfrog during the ratings process, for example, you could boost a poorly performing article. It is unclear, however, if this is against the Helium user agreement. At the very least, I don’t do it because it seems unethical.

Other folks advocate submitting their articles at a certain time. One theory suggests that submitting all your articles on the final day gives you a better chance of winning. In my experience, none of these tactics seems to have clearly better results than the others.

## Understanding contest ratings

Contest ratings, as anyone who has tried to follow them can tell you, are something of a mystery. During the contest period, your article might go from #1 down to last place and back up again, only to fall to third during the calculation period. If you don’t know what to expect, this roller-coaster ride can be quite harrowing.

The Helium contest rating system is far from perfect. Helium provides results within two days after a contest closes. This means that, often, an article that will eventually settle in to a #1 or #2 ranking may wind up in the middle somewhere. This is the price to pay for getting fast results. If Helium allowed

the articles to be rated for a couple of weeks, we'd have a more accurate picture of the real rankings.

## Staying motivated during contests

Staying motivated during a Helium writing contest can be challenging. Here are a few handy tips and tricks to help you stay motivated in Helium writing contests:

- Focus on the big picture. Remember that whether or not you win a Helium writing contest, there are other reasons you are writing at Helium. Maybe you want to improve your writing skills and you believe that the ratings system is one great way for you to do that. Maybe you are trying to earn a residual income on your articles over time. Whatever the reasons that you are writing on Helium, keep those things in mind at contest time so that you don't become discouraged.
- Realize that you can win. The best writers don't always win the Helium contests. Sometimes someone wins a contest who isn't as good a writer as you are. However, if you are a good writer and work hard at writing in the Helium contests, you will eventually win. While the ratings system for contests is far from perfect, the writers who write well tend to do better, on average, than poor writers.
- Spend some time in the Community forums. The other writers at Helium enjoy talking with one another about the contests on a weekly basis. Share your frustrations, whine if you want to, and get advice from those who have been writing in contests for quite a while. Often, folks in the forums even create friendly competitions between themselves when it comes to the Helium writing contests.
- Don't follow the ratings while the contest is open. It takes a couple of days or more after a contest is over for the ratings to stabilize and get where they are going to be in the end. Following your ratings from day to day can be frustrating and can make it a great deal harder to stay motivated.

Ultimately, remember that the contests at Helium are just another way for you to improve your craft as a writer and to make a little bit of spare change on

the side. Keep it all in perspective, and, when you don't win, try again next week.

### **More about contests at Helium**

Do you want to know more about winning Helium contests? Be sure to check out my blog post on [How to make \\$750 a Week Writing Part Time at Helium](#).

## **MAKING MONEY AT HELIUM WITH THE MARKETPLACE**

I'll be completely honest with you: I haven't done much with the Marketplace as of yet. I think I enjoy the thrill of contests much more than the simple yes or no of the Marketplace. I've submitted just a few articles and had only minor success to date. I've culled these tips from the message boards and from email conversations with folks who have been successful in the Helium Marketplace.

So, how do you make money in the Marketplace? Two things keep coming up in discussion on that question:

### **Following guidelines**

Publishers in the Marketplace are looking for very specific things. Mostly they want articles that they don't have to edit or revise. As such, most of the publishers provide extensive guidelines. To sell your articles in the Helium Marketplace, you have to follow the publisher's guidelines to the letter.

### **SEO**

Some Marketplace publishers are print publishers or E-zine publishers. They aren't worried about search engine optimization (SEO). Many of the publishers, however, are just looking for good web content. Research your publisher to know which one you're writing for. If your publisher wants web content, you probably want to implement SEO techniques in your writing. This is probably the other main reason I've not written much for the Marketplace: for me, writing SEO articles is boring.

## About ratings and the marketplace

The last thing you need to know about the Marketplace is that publishers tend to ignore article ratings. They pick the article that best suits their needs, rather than the article that is highly rated. The rules for getting high article ratings don't apply to the Marketplace.

# MAKING RECURSIVE INCOME AT HELIUM

## How recursive income works

Recursive income is income that you generate continually, without any ongoing maintenance. The articles you write at Helium continue to earn money over time. During April, I made close to \$2 a day on my articles at Helium. Over time, this promises to be an excellent source of revenue.

## Choosing topics

One of the integral parts to making money with recursive income on your Helium articles is choosing good topics. Topics that involve a particular product tend to do well. Topics in specific areas, such as fitness, health and business, tend to do well, too. The main thing is to choose timeless topics, rather than timely topics. Yes, you can write an article about the 2008 U.S. presidential election, but you're not going to make money on that article much past the beginning of 2009.

## Article promotion

Here are several ways to marketing your Helium article or articles:

1. Use social bookmarking sites. Sites like Digg and StumbleUpon are designed so that users can share their favorite web pages with other users who are interested in those same topics. Getting to know how StumbleUpon and Digg work and then using them to promote your articles can be an effective way of marketing your Helium article.
2. Use SEO techniques in your writing. SEO refers to the process of making a web page more likely to show up in search engine results at sites like

Yahoo and Google. By understanding what keywords web surfers are searching for and by including those keywords in certain ways in your Helium article, you can drive search engine traffic to your article.

3. Link to your article from your own web page or blog. One great way to market your Helium article is to link to it from your website or blog. While you probably don't want to put it in your blogroll, there's nothing wrong with mentioning one of your Helium articles in a blog post on the same topic.
4. Use the "featured article" section of your About Me page on Helium. This gives folks who look at your author page the opportunity to view the article, as well.

While there are other ways to market your Helium article, these four techniques are almost guaranteed to get your article at least some exposure.

## Helium's recursive income program today

I am going to reserve judgment as to the long-term prospects of recursive income on Helium, for now. During May, I've seen a sharp dip in my recursive earnings. I've been in touch with Helium, and the response is, essentially, that Google has restructured their AdSense payments and it has hurt. I believe this to be true, as I've seen it happen elsewhere. As it stands today, I'm making less than \$.50 a day on my Helium articles. I'll be keeping an eye on what happens, and I'll be posting updates on [my blog](#) as things develop.

## **MAKING MONEY WITH HELIUM'S SPECIAL PROMOTIONS**

On several occasions, Helium has held contests and promotions to increase the number of writers. In fact, it was the most recent promotion that got me hooked on Helium.

### **The Write & Rate Reward-athon**

I discovered this contest in late February. The contest, essentially, proposed to pay Helium writers a certain amount per article written between January 1 and April 15, 2008, based on the number of articles submitted. If you submitted 500 articles, you'd receive \$3 per article. The pay rates went down from there, to \$1 per article for fewer than 30. In the end, I received \$2.50 for each of 350 or so articles that I submitted. This is where the vast majority of my Helium income has come from.

The good news here is that Helium runs these sorts of promotions on a regular basis. By the time this report really begins to circulate around the Internet, it is likely that we will be in the midst of another promotion. While you can still make plenty of money at Helium with contests, the Marketplace and recursive earnings, the promotions are a nice shot in the arm.

## MAKING MONEY WITH HELIUM REFERRALS

Referrals are another potential source of income from Helium that, like the Marketplace, I haven't had much experience with just yet. Having said that, I do like the way the referral program works. Rather than getting a flat amount for each referral, Helium offers you 5% of the amount that your referrals make. That means, essentially, that it is in your best interest to make sure your referrals are earning money.

As I said in the beginning of this report, that's one of the reasons why I'm writing this report. It is my hope that you'll sign up for Helium from my referral link, make a bunch of money for both of us. Like I said before, that referral bonus doesn't reduce *your* earnings.

If you are part of the Site Steward program at Helium, you can use a link designed especially for you to refer folks to Helium. If not, you can still invite up to 50 people at a time using the Invite-a-Writer feature within Helium.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

For me, I don't see an end to my involvement in Helium. While I won't be writing 350 articles in 45 days again anytime soon, I am having a blast writing in the weekly contests and helping new Helium writers get into their own groove.

While the issue of performance payments is still somewhat undecided, I'm confident Helium will find a good solution that keeps it competitive. I'm cautiously optimistic that I'll soon see my \$2 a day in recursive income return and then increase. Even if it returns to and stays at \$2 a day, at least I know my satellite bill is paid for the indefinite future.

If you've made it to this point of the report, I can assume that you're still interested in making money on Helium. Excellent! Here's what you need to do, today:

1. Follow my referral link to [sign up](#).
2. Browse through some of the categories to find article topics you might like to write to. Make sure you choose some topics with higher market value – topics such as health, lifestyle issues, sports, specific products, business, finance, relationships and family. Choose some other topics, too; you can never be certain when a topic might just be an untapped market.
3. Spend some time introducing yourself in the Helium Community forums.
4. Subscribe to my blog [via RSS](#) or [via E-mail](#) to get regular writing advice and updates on what I'm doing at Helium.
5. Read the following section on common mistakes new Helium users make.
6. Shoot me an [e-mail](#) any time you have a Helium-related question.

## Common mistakes new Helium users make

As a new Helium user, it can be a bit intimidating trying to get used to the site. Helium is unlike any other article submission site in many ways. Here are some of the most common sorts of mistakes that new Helium users tend to make:

- **Formatting mistakes.** Because Helium does not allow HTML or any other sort of formatting in its articles, new Helium users sometimes wind up making formatting mistakes. They may not realize, for example, that they should leave an extra line break in between paragraphs. They may not realize that you can make bullet-point lists using asterisks or make numbered lists. Formatting is one of the areas that new Helium users really ought to study before jumping too far in.
- **Not rating properly.** On Helium, you earn rating stars not only based on the number of articles that you rate, but on the quality of your ratings. While Helium hasn't explained exactly how its article rating system works in terms of your ratings stars, you can be sure that just clicking through the ratings screens as quickly as possible won't earn rating stars for you. You need to spend some time on each rating, searching for problems with grammar, formatting, plagiarism, length and relevance.
- **Missing the forums.** Many new Helium users can benefit greatly from spending time in the Helium Community forums. The forums are designed so that experienced users can share their advice with new users, and so that Helium staff can interact with the community. The Community section of Helium is one of the most useful parts of the site.
- **[Plagiarism](#).** Whether it is intentional or not, many new Helium users wind up cutting and pasting their articles from Wikipedia or from another source. Helium does not tolerate plagiarism, and those articles, along with the accounts attached to them, will be deleted. In many cases plagiarism is intentional, but it is possible that someone just doesn't understand how it works.

Certainly, these aren't the only [mistakes](#) that new Helium users make, but they are some of the ones that seem to occur most frequently.

## APPENDIX: HOW HELIUM CAN IMPROVE

The diverse features of Helium combine the competitive Marketplace, reminiscent of freelance sites where writers can bid on writing work, with the performance payments of sites like Associated Content. Helium even provides a sporting arena of sorts in the Writing Contests, in which writers can compete with one another week after week. To be sure, from the writer's perspective, Helium can improve relatively few areas.

One area where Helium can improve is in article formatting. Most article directories allow a limited number of HTML commands, such as bulleted lists, italics, accents and boldface. These features would greatly improve the writer's perspective on Helium, and they would improve the reader's experience. Using asterisks for bullet points and using quotation marks for emphasis greatly undermines the writer's ability to make a point in some cases. This is, from the writer's perspective, the very first thing that Helium could, and should, improve.

Another possible area of improvement that Helium could make from the writer's perspective has to do with the contest ratings. It seems to take around a week to two weeks for contest ratings to settle into their long-term rating. This means that the articles rated highest over time often don't win the contests. Whether it is through a delay of contest completion or whether it is through a different rating algorithm, the contest rating system could improve.

Finally, Helium could improve by offering writers another way to link out to their own blogs or websites. Writers bring in an enormous volume of traffic to Helium through their writing, and while a link on the "[About Me](#)" page is nice, most of the other article directories allow at the very least a "resource" section where the writer can provide a link or two.

Update: Since the original publication of The Helium Report, changes may be afoot. According to sources inside Helium, live links from within articles will be available sometime in June, 2008. If this comes to pass, Helium becomes an even more attractive option for folks who have a website or blog they would like to promote.

If Helium never changes any of these things, it will be in danger of falling behind. One of the other directories, or another new website, will do it. In the meantime, Helium is still the best thing going from the writer's perspective, in spite of the areas in which it can improve.