



Thriving in the Gig Economy

Freelancing Online for Tech Professionals and Entrepreneurs

Adam Sinicki

Apress®

THRIVING IN THE GIG ECONOMY

FREELANCING ONLINE FOR TECH
PROFESSIONALS AND ENTREPRENEURS

Adam Sinicki

Apress®

Thriving in the Gig Economy: Freelancing Online for Tech Professionals and Entrepreneurs

Adam Sinicki
Bicester, UK

ISBN-13 (pbk): 978-1-4842-4089-2

ISBN-13 (electronic): 978-1-4842-4090-8

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4842-4090-8>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018962549

Copyright © 2019 by Adam Sinicki

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

Trademarked names, logos, and images may appear in this book. Rather than use a trademark symbol with every occurrence of a trademarked name, logo, or image we use the names, logos, and images only in an editorial fashion and to the benefit of the trademark owner, with no intention of infringement of the trademark.

The use in this publication of trade names, trademarks, service marks, and similar terms, even if they are not identified as such, is not to be taken as an expression of opinion as to whether or not they are subject to proprietary rights.

While the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication, neither the authors nor the editors nor the publisher can accept any legal responsibility for any errors or omissions that may be made. The publisher makes no warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein.

Managing Director, Apress Media LLC: Welmoed Spahr

Acquisitions Editor: Shiva Ramachandran

Development Editor: Laura Berendson

Coordinating Editor: Rita Fernando

Cover designed by eStudioCalamar

Distributed to the book trade worldwide by Springer Science+Business Media New York, 233 Spring Street, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10013. Phone 1-800-SPRINGER, fax (201) 348-4505, e-mail orders-ny@springer-sbm.com, or visit www.springeronline.com. Apress Media, LLC is a California LLC and the sole member (owner) is Springer Science + Business Media Finance Inc (SSBM Finance Inc). SSBM Finance Inc is a **Delaware** corporation.

For information on translations, please e-mail rights@apress.com, or visit <http://www.apress.com/rights-permissions>.

Apress titles may be purchased in bulk for academic, corporate, or promotional use. eBook versions and licenses are also available for most titles. For more information, reference our Print and eBook Bulk Sales web page at <http://www.apress.com/bulk-sales>.

Any source code or other supplementary material referenced by the author in this book is available to readers on GitHub via the book's product page, located at www.apress.com/9781484240892. For more detailed information, please visit <http://www.apress.com/source-code>.

Printed on acid-free paper

In loving memory of my Dad, Janusz Sinicki

Contents

About the Author	vii
Foreword	ix
Acknowledgments	xi
Introduction	xiii
Chapter 1: Welcome to the Gig Economy	1
Chapter 2: Getting Started with the Gig Economy and Finding Work	13
Chapter 3: Expanding Your Reach	31
Chapter 4: Choosing Your Gigs and Rates Wisely	51
Chapter 5: Delivering Great Work	75
Chapter 6: Communication and Collaboration	99
Chapter 7: The Busywork of Business	123
Chapter 8: Lifestyle Design	151
Chapter 9: Looking Forward	175
Chapter 10: Setting Sail: Making the Gig Economy Work for You	201
Index	219

About the Author



Adam Sinicki is a writer, programmer, and presenter living in Bicester, Oxfordshire, UK, where he spends a lot of his time on his laptop in the local coffee shops.

Adam has been working on a freelance basis as a programmer and SEO writer for the past eight years under the company name NQR Productions. He currently spends a lot of this time as a blogger and YouTube presenter at Android Authority, where he covers phone reviews as well as development content. Adam has also found success with numerous other projects, including his own Android app Multiscreen Multitasking, which had over 30,000 paid downloads across its various iterations and came as preloaded software on over 60,000 handsets in India. He also provided the code for Coldfusion's Voxis Launcher.

This is Adam's second book with Apress, the first being *Learn Unity for Android Game Development* (2017).

If you'd like to read more of Adam's work, he also discusses tech, online business, and his other passions for fitness, psychology, and self-development over at his blog: The Bioneer (www.thebioneer.com) and YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/thebioneer). The latter now has over 50,000 subscribers. You can also find him on Instagram (www.instagram.com/thebioneer) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/thebioneer). Stop by and say hi!

When Adam's not working, he enjoys reading comics, working out, playing video games, and relaxing at home with his wife Hannah. They are currently expecting their first baby.

Foreword

I first met Adam Sinicki back in July of 2013. Adam was a subscriber of my YouTube channel ColdFusion. He reached out to me explaining how he had written apps for Android and asked me if I wanted to work on one with him. This was the start of a long-standing project that we both took great joy and excitement in. The result was an Android application called Voxis, essentially a homescreen replacement for Android. The app transformed the look of one's phone to a modern, sleek design with the click of a button. Previously this task took hours of customization and downloading separate apps.

Adam had previously already coded an app of his own, Multiscreen Multitasking, which was very forward-looking for 2013 (this was years before floating chat-heads in Facebook or anything of that nature). Adam was great to work with, friendly, and was always keen to try out new ideas.

From the start we did most of our work remotely and, amazingly, we both worked from home. Adam from London, England, and I from Perth, Australia. Through the wonders of online collaborative technology, we were able to design, implement, release, and market the app (through my YouTube channel).

The completed end-to-end pipeline of the Voxis project highlights the brave new world we live in when it comes to the gig economy. For the first time in history, work can be done from anywhere and by anyone with an Internet connection and a computer! With freelancing websites becoming popular, there are more opportunities than ever before for self-managed work.

Dagogo Altraide, Founder of ColdFusion Studios,
www.youtube.com/user/coldfusion

Acknowledgments

This book would not have been possible without the love and support of my wonderful wife, Hannah Sinicki. She is my best friend and my rock.

I'd also like tip my hat to the people who inspired me to set up my own business in the first place: my dad Janusz Sinicki, Uncle Z, and granddad Bernard Hunt. Also, Tony Stark.

I should also thank my good friend Matthew Tutt, who introduced me to the world of making money online (and who once held the number one spot on Google for that precise search term!). I likely wouldn't have ended up in this job if it wasn't for all his help!

A shout out to Chris "Goof" Hanlon. Because it has become a tradition, not because he has done anything particularly useful.

Plenty of other people got their acknowledgements in the last book . . .

Introduction

The Internet gives us the power to access the world's information in an instant, to leverage incredibly powerful tools located across the world, and to collaborate as teams distributed remotely. We can create things that would previously have been impossible for a single person, and we can communicate our ideas with millions of people at a time.

We are only just tapping into the full potential that all this offers—even as newer tools and innovations expand the possibilities even further.

The gig economy has emerged as a natural outcome of this change. With more freedom to work when and how we choose, more of us are now opting to forego conventional 9-5 jobs and to start deciding for ourselves how we want to shape our careers.

Why spend hours every week commuting into an office, only to be given a fraction of the value you have provided to the client or customer? Why feel forced to choose just one career, or to let someone else decide on your working hours and wages? Why work on projects you have no interest in?

By offering services on a “per gig” basis, we free ourselves to select the kind of work that best serves our goals. We can use this to accelerate our careers and create a star-studded portfolio, or we can use it to design a lifestyle that lets us spend more time doing the things we love—with the people we love.

And more exciting still, by doing this, we become pioneers of a brave new world.

If you are a tech professional, then you are uniquely equipped to do this, and to enjoy all the benefits that the lifestyle has to offer. That said, anyone with a little entrepreneurial spirit and familiarity with digital tools will be able to make the gig economy work for them. Programmers, security specialists, web designers, video editors, Internet marketers, writers, editors, photographers, musicians, coaches . . . all these professions are starting to find new ways of working online. And while this book is particularly tailored to tech professionals, the same tips, rules, and ideas can be applied in any industry and reach any goal.

Whether you choose to run a business full time providing services to clients on a case-by-case basis or choose to create a “side hustle,” there are amazing opportunities here for all.

And this book will provide you with all the information, tips, tools, encouragement, and motivation to get out there and make it happen. You will learn not only how to find clients willing to pay for your services, create a business and file taxes, and use the most common tools to deliver work and get paid, but also how to stay focused and productive when working without a boss, transition to this new way of working without taking unnecessary risks, and develop yourself further and grow your personal brand.

We will also explore how the gig economy is likely to change and develop with the introduction of newer technologies—and how you can prepare for those changes.

It is exceedingly likely that this type of work will become increasingly commonplace. Fewer and fewer people are now remaining in single jobs their entire lives, and many of us are becoming “digital polymaths” with multiple skills to offer. Internet speeds are getting faster, and tools are getting smarter.

But by taking this leap early on, we can reap amazing benefits right now and give ourselves important footholds in this emerging market—the “fourth industrial revolution.” Keep reading if you want to become an early adopter of this new and exciting way of life.

Welcome to the Gig Economy

An Exciting Opportunity for Tech Professionals and Entrepreneurs

If knowledge is indeed power, then you have at your disposal the most powerful tool in the history of mankind.

I have heard many writers bemoan the fact that technology has not impacted the world in the ways depicted in so many science fiction films. There are no flying cars and very few silver jump suits.

And yet, in my view, the many ways that technology has actually changed the world are actually even *more* interesting. For example, the Internet has changed how we communicate with one another, how we entertain ourselves, and how we work. Nobody could have predicted it.

Today, more and more people are working online, and more and more businesses are working remotely. There are more opportunities than ever before for professionals—especially within the technology industry—to further their careers and work how, when, and where they want. The world is just catching up to these new possibilities, but it is safe to say that they are going to fundamentally change our way of life.

In fact, they already can. And if you act fast, you can get a foothold in an emerging marketing and gain a significant advantage over the competition.

This is your chance to become a pioneer. To work in a manner that wasn't possible even just a few years ago. To design the lifestyle that you want, to create opportunities that you never imagined, and to earn a solid and stable income in the process; all thanks to the transformative power of technology.

By working “gigs” online, you can earn a little side income, or you can completely change your lifestyle and remove the shackles of 9-to-5 office work. You can join the many “digital nomads” who travel the world while working online, or you can elevate your own rising star and design your dream job.

Who needs flying cars?

Whatever your ambition, the Web can make it happen. You'll discover how in this book.

The Gig Economy

The “gig economy” is one term that can be used to describe the manner of working just introduced. But it is also a rather broad term, so perhaps it would be useful to define precisely what we mean when we use it.

“Gig economy” is broadly used in this book to refer to the abundance of short-term work and contracts. This is driven by companies that hire staff for individual projects and pay them on a per-job or hourly basis, rather than offering them a full-term employment contract. This often applies to food delivery, taxi services, and even skilled labor such as programming and engineering.

Unfortunately, this type of agreement often benefits those companies far more than it benefits the freelancers that work with them. In short, those taxi and food delivery gigs come with all the disadvantages of working for a single organization (it becomes harder to juggle other work, you are given minimal flexibility as to which jobs you take on and when etc.) and all the disadvantages of being self-employed (no contract, no fixed wage, no health insurance, no sick pay).

Thus, the term “gig economy” often comes with negative connotations as a result; similar to “zero-hour contracts.” But the gig economy can *also* refer to the trend of taking on online gigs. In this context, it refers to freelancers who advertise their skills on sites like Upwork, PeoplePerHour, and Fiverr (indeed, jobs advertised on Fiverr are referred to as “gigs” by the company's own terminology). The concept is the same: the individual will be paid per job or per fixed, short-term contract.

It can also mean working in an office, but even that has more advantages when it is skilled work that we are talking about. No longer are you an easily replaceable cog in a machine, but a valuable superstar who is choosing where to spend their time.

This is the precise same type of agreement, but now the power lies in the hands of the freelancer. It's up to you to choose which jobs you take on, the contracts you want to negotiate, and how (and ideally where) you actually complete the work. When you work online it is far easier to juggle multiple clients, and to decide which jobs to take on. This is where freelancing gives you the flexibility and freedom to work how *you* want, to increase your profits, and to enjoy even greater stability.

Companies are increasingly looking for professionals to complete short jobs for them, and the Web has given us the tools to make that more convenient than ever. The goal is not to let those companies use this to take advantage of us, but rather to use it to *our* advantage.

Many people will still object to the idea of freelancing, believing that it is inherently less stable and secure. But as you read through this book, you will learn that this doesn't have to be the case; you can have your cake and eat it too.

So, from this point onward, the "gig economy" refers specifically to online work catering to tech professionals (and others outside the tech industry to a slightly lesser extent) who want to work on a freelance basis with no strings.

The Benefits of Freelancing: Who Is This For?

Freelancing through online gigs in the tech industry (and other fields) brings with it a huge range of different advantages. Of course, it's not for everyone, though, so it's best at this point that you understand what you're getting into . . . before you decide to swallow that red pill and change your perception of reality irrevocably.

Note that the freelancing option doesn't have to be a binary, either-or kind of thing. You can just as well work online as a freelancer in your spare time to make some money on the side. If you like the sounds of some of these points but are put off by others, then you *do* have the option to go half in. You can pick and choose. And that's a big part of the appeal! I'll be discussing that option more later in this book.

What Freelancing Does for You

So, why freelance? This section describes some of the highly significant ways in which freelancing and entering the gig economy can transform your life for the better.

Time Flexibility

Have a friend who brags that their organization offers them flextime? Ha! Flextime is nothing to you as a freelancer!

If you want to work four-hour days and are willing to take the cut in income that comes with that, then that's your call. If you want to finish work early one day "just because," then most of the time you can. If you want to work an extra hour a day and stop working Mondays, then that's an option too—that's what I do!

There are limits to this flexibility, of course. If you continually shirk on your deadlines, then people are going to stop working with you. And if your contract requires you to be online during certain hours, then you can't pack in early without telling anyone. But if you're smart in your planning (which this book will help you with), then you'll be able to choose a work schedule that you enjoy.

And, of course, that means you can choose to prioritize other things in your life. I am never more appreciative that I work for myself than when my wife needs me to pick her up from work early because she's unwell. Being a freelancer lets me be there for the people I love.

Or maybe you just want to spend more time skiing, or working out, or building a side business. Freelancing gives you more freedom, time, and energy to "do you."

■ **Note** Working gigs is ideal for "bootstrapping" a new business idea, as will be discussed in Chapter 9.

Notice how Bruce Wayne doesn't have a super-demanding 9-to-5 day job? Or Peter Parker? Or Clark Kent? Do you want to be Batman? Or stressed-out Joe?

Freedom of Location

If you're the kind of person who doesn't like being micromanaged, who gets frustrated that they have to stick to a certain dress code, and who would much rather take their lunch break when it suits them, then you'll likely enjoy the gig economy.

By working remotely via the Web, you'll have the freedom to operate from a home office if you so choose, which means that you can enjoy all of the creature comforts and luxuries of being in your own environment. That also means there's no need for a commute—the value of which cannot be stressed enough. Imagine your current working day without a 20- to 90-minute slog each way during rush hour. And without the cost of fuel or train tickets!

If you follow this through to its logical conclusion, then it leads you to some exciting possibilities as embodied by “digital nomads” who travel the world while working from a laptop (more on this later). That may not appeal to you, but there are other options. When I lived in Bournemouth, a seaside town on the southern coast of England, I would regularly take a stroll down to the beach and sit with a cocktail (fruit cocktail—I was working!) and watch the world go by. Today I often work in libraries and coffee shops in Oxford and London.

In his book *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (W.W. Norton, 1997), author Jared Diamond explains how those tribes that were most geographically blessed were eventually the ones able to grow into developed civilizations. With the gig economy, geography need no longer be a limiting factor.

Work You Enjoy

When you work online or work short-term gigs, you’ll gain the flexibility to take on the jobs that you want, to work with the people and organizations you want, and to stop working when you want.

Love coding but not a fan of collaboration? Then just pick and choose those types of jobs.

Enjoy web design but hate marketing and “communication overhead” (I hear you)? Then find an agency.

This is a learning process for sure, and to begin with you won’t be able to afford to be picky. But with time, you’ll be able to pick and choose the kind of work that appeals to you and turn down the rest. That’s the kind of thing that gets you fired in conventional employment.

Set Your Own Fee

When you work gigs, you get to set your own fee, although there is normally a bit of a trade-off here between this point and the others (e.g., do you do work less and earn less, or do you take on more work that you don’t enjoy as much?).

Ultimately, though, you can decide how much money you need to earn and then set that as your target. While it might be hard to negotiate the rate of pay you want at first, you will *always* have the option to put in more hours, and sometimes that is going to be handy. Boiler broken at a time when you *really* can’t afford to have it fixed? Then just calculate how many more jobs you need to accept and find a way to make that work around your other commitments.

Want to treat yourself to a meal out guilt-free? Then just do a bit of work one Saturday. The option is always there.

Productivity

Believe it or not, chances are that you can be *hugely* more productive when you're self-employed.

When you work for a big organization, you are on their time. They are paying for you to be available between the hours of 9 and 5 (typically). But are they necessarily getting the best work out of you in that time? The answer for many businesses is no: they'll have you answering the phone, responding to e-mails, attending meetings, doing menial errands, and so forth. All of these little jobs serve predominantly as distractions from the main bulk of your work: the skilled, value-creating work that you were originally hired to do.

Imagine how much more work you could accomplish in eight hours if you didn't have all those frustrating distractions and if you could work in an uninterrupted state of flow, the psychological state of intense focus, first described by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008) and subsequently applied specifically to working productively in Cal Newport's *Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World* (Grand Central Publishing, 2016).

You now have two options: do twice the *actual* work and double your income (and your career progression) OR clock off at 4 p.m. and call it a day. And I'll talk to you about how to get better at stints of intense concentration later in this book.

Stability

I also believe that, in many ways, being self-employed is actually a *more* stable and reliable way to earn money versus working for an employer.

Think about it: If you are employed by just one company and that company goes under, you're out of a job. No more income. The same goes if you get let go.

But if you have ten ongoing clients, what are the chances that *all of them* are going to up and leave you at the very same time? Very slim, one would hope.

Not only that, but more and more people are going to be turning to freelancers as word gets out. Why would a company limit itself to the local pool of talent when it could go online and find *the very best in the business* to do the job? Why would a company spend resources and office space on a permanent member of staff when it can get the same work done with no overhead, no administration, and no commitment?

And smaller consumer services will also benefit from the same things. Why would someone choose to get their services from a large, faceless corporation—where they will pay more overhead and struggle to ever get in touch with the top brass—when they could work directly with a more affordable individual, someone who has earned their trust through a blog and who will be ready to answer questions immediately?

This topic is discussed in more detail in the book *Race Against the Machine* (Digital Frontier Press, 2011), by Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee, where it is described as the “great restructuring.” Brynjolfsson and McAfee, by the way, suggest that the people who will thrive in this new business economy will be those that are able to work with “intelligent machines.” That’s you!

This is simply future-proofing. More and more jobs will become outsourced. If you’re already a freelancer, then you will be ready, you will have a foothold in the market, and you will have the competitive advantage.

Your Own Business (And Personal Development)

When you work freelance, you run your own business. It might not feel like it, because you’re not the CEO of a big corporation barking out orders and speaking to boards of directors. But nevertheless, you will be a sole proprietor (sole trader), or you will own a limited liability company (limited business). You may have your own company name and trademark, or you might have a “personal brand.”

Either way, thinking about yourself as a “business” not only is crucial to your success, but will also make the entire process all the more rewarding. You’ll be building lists of clients and contacts, managing relationships, developing new skills (R&D), investing in equipment and training courses, and promoting yourself. The only difference is that now *all* of those things will be benefiting you directly. You won’t get “thank you” and a bigger Christmas bonus when you bring in a massive new job/client: you’ll reap 100% of the profit.

If you’re currently working for an company and feeling underappreciated, then becoming your own business is the perfect tonic.

What Freelancing Isn’t (The Downsides)

While I am always the first to reel off the virtues of freelancing to anyone who asks (and a lot of people who don’t), there are also some important considerations to take into account. It’s not all sunshine and roses, and this section points out some of the things to keep in mind when deciding if this lifestyle is right for you.

You Need Discipline

If you're going to freelance, then you *need* to be disciplined. That means you need to be able to shut the world out and go to town on that website backend/search engine optimization (SEO) content. It means you need to be able to avoid the temptation to take breaks whenever you feel like it, and it means you need to be able to stay self-motivated in order to meet deadlines.

If you can't imagine working from home without being tempted to give up and play computer games, then perhaps this lifestyle isn't for you. With that said, though, note that this discipline is something that can be practiced and that will improve with time.

What's *just as important* in terms of discipline is that you take the time off when you *aren't* working. This will ensure you're at your most productive when you return to work and it will also prevent you from making yourself ill or alienating friends and family!

Other People

This is a vague heading, sure, but other people create all kinds of problems for you as a freelancer.

First off, you will find that you often have a hard time trying to describe to other people what exactly it is you do. When you tell people you're self-employed, they'll very often assume what you *really* mean is that you are unemployed (as does the delivery guy, presumably, after the fourth parcel you accept in your pajamas at 11 a.m.).

I spent the first four years of self-employment being asked when I would "get a real job." Once people started seeing my name on big websites and learned of my business trips abroad, they finally stopped.

The other problem is that people can't quite get their head around the fact that you're not available for calls and to run errands. If you work from home, then you'll find that people call you during work hours and are offended if you aren't free to answer or chat.

The problem is that you'll want to take advantage of your flexibility, and when you do, other people may assume that you have unlimited flexibility. Sometimes you *will* be free to meet up during the day and work later in the evening instead. But if you do it once, people may not realize you can't always do it (without getting very behind on sleep or work).

Oh, and the next time that someone asks you "what you do," expect it to be a long conversation!

Lack of Other People

Now I'm being purposefully contrary. But the point I'm making is that you will be working on your own much of the time. That means a lot of isolation, and for some people, being part of a "team" is one of the big perks of work.

For that reason, this type of career is arguably better suited to introverts. That said, when the time comes to speak with a client in person, it can help to be a bit more extroverted (there is such thing as an ambivert!).

If you feel you will suffer as a result of not being around co-workers, then you need to make sure that you make up for it by jam-packing your free time with social alternatives. I used to work in London sometimes and meet my wife or cousin for lunch, for instance.

Ultimately in my view, I'd rather spend more time with people I care about than people I have been made to work with. But again, this comes down to personal preference.

Admin

There is also a fair amount of admin and "fiddly stuff" to contend with when setting up any business. While a sole proprietor has less to worry about than a limited liability company, you do still need to consider things like filing tax returns, logging your expenses and income, dealing with clients, investing in marketing (maybe including trademarks), and more. You'll need to sign up to websites, and you may wish to create your own business website.

All this *can* be a headache and it is often a considerable "barrier to entry." In other words, if you're not 100% sure about working as a freelancer, potential admin tasks may be enough to deter you from diving in. The good news is that you can take these responsibilities on slowly and eventually automate or outsource a great deal of them.

Risk

One of my goals in this book is to demonstrate to you that being an online freelancer can be just as stable as being employed. In fact, it can actually be *more* stable in some cases—as I said earlier. But in the interests of balance, let's consider risk.

At the end of the day, you won't be employed. You won't have a long-term contract. There is no guarantee that the work will keep coming. That's a *shift* in the way we have been brought up to view work, and for some, that's bound to incite just a little anxiety.

All risk can be mitigated, and I do believe you'll see that as we proceed through this book. BUT you do need just a *little* courage in order to strike out on your own. Depending on how you're wired, that risk might be seen as a positive thing.

The game is afoot!

What You Will Learn

If you've read all the preceding potential downsides of freelance work and you're still with me, then congratulations! You may just be cut out for the gig economy after all.

And this book is going to serve as your ignition and your roadmap. The aim is to help you see the possibilities, to help you set up a working business model, and then to navigate the *many* pitfalls along the way to fulfill your vision.

Topics covered will include:

- The types of work you can sell
- Where to sell that work
- How to promote yourself
- How to distinguish a good client from a bad one
- How to negotiate the best rates
- How to juggle a massive workload
- How to manage your money
- How to do gigs “on the side” to supplement your income
- How to learn online to increase your skill set
- How to transition to full-time freelancing
- How to set up an online business
- How to grow, scale, and develop your business
- How to handle admin, taxes, and so on
- How to optimize your work/life balance and take full advantage of the flexibility you are now afforded
- How the gig economy will grow and develop into the future

Plus, the usual vague “and much more.”

Chapter Summary

So, in this chapter, we explored the compelling reasons to consider entering the gig economy, especially as a tech entrepreneur. I hope it has inspired you while at the same time preparing you for the reality of being self-sufficient in this way.

In the next chapter, we'll be looking at the steps you need to take to make this lifestyle a reality. You'll learn where to find clients and how your relationships with them will tend to work. This chapter was the why; next up comes the how.

Getting Started with the Gig Economy and Finding Work

What to Sell and How to Sell It

Hopefully, I've set the scene for the gig economy sufficiently in Chapter 1 and you're now feeling psyched to get started. And probably a little anxious. A little anxiety is good; it keeps you focused.

But it's all still rather conceptual and abstract at this point. So enough with the aspirational talk; let's get practical! In this chapter, you're going to learn the nuts and bolts of selling your skills online. What you can sell, where you can sell it, and so forth.

What Are You Going to Sell?

Maybe you came into this with a business model in mind. Maybe you're going to turn your current job into a freelance gig. Or maybe you have a passion that you want to turn into a profitable business.

But on the other hand, you might just know you want *out* but have no idea how to get there.

The good news is that there are *lots* of services you can sell online, and chances are that there's at least *something* you can offer. This book is aimed specifically at technology entrepreneurs, and if you are a coder, a web developer, an Internet marketer, or anyone else with basic computer skills, then you're going to have *tons* of options.

But if you're not any of those things, then don't worry—this book is for you as well, and there are plenty more options. This section provides some ideas to whet your appetite. You don't need to read all of this section; just glance over and see what sticks out to you.

Tech Skills That Sell Well Online

While you can sell pretty much anything under the sun—and you'll see just how true this is in a moment—the reality is that certain skills are more suitable for selling online than others. This is owing not only to demand, but also factors such as value, time, and marketability. Here are some great places to start.

Programming

Programming is perhaps *the* best skill you can sell online. It is *particularly* skill-based and it's something that's in high demand. Countless businesses are looking for programmers to develop apps, to work on in-house software, and to manage their websites.

All types of coders are in demand online, though some languages are in greater demand than others, of course. Python is often up there as one of the most sought-after languages, as is Java. Knowing C and C++ is great for game development, while using C# and having a familiarity with Unity or Unreal will also help in this regard. Likewise, specific skills pertaining to Android development or iOS can also be beneficial.

The holy grail is the “full-stack developer.” This is someone that can handle everything necessary to build a fully functioning, interactive website or web app with a back end, user profiles, and other features. In other words, you'll need HTML and CSS for web design, along with something like PHP for the back end, MySQL, and so forth.