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JUN, 2014

[Perhaps we won't all be rooned: Why life as a content provider has much to recommend it \(http://www.walkleys.com/perhaps-wont-rooned-life-content-provider-much-recommend/\)](http://www.walkleys.com/perhaps-wont-rooned-life-content-provider-much-recommend/)

In the first of our new series of blog posts by CommsDirect speakers Nigel Bowen, Director of Content Sherpa, shares how leaving his job with a major media organisation led to a career rebirth.

Whenever I hear a media industry heavy hitter, invariably fresh from retrenching a third of their organisation's workforce, chirpily announce that this is "an incredibly exciting time to be working in the media" I'm gripped by a profound urge to punch them in the throat.

So before I proceed to argue the case for this being an incredibly exciting time to be, to use Fred Hilmer's immortal descriptor, a content provider let me provide some mitigating personal history.

Two and a half years ago I ceased to be employed by the major media organisation I had spent years labouring for. As a journalist I'd always prided myself on my ability to analyse situations in a clear-eyed fashion and after reviewing my employment prospects I came to the considered conclusion that I was utterly screwed. All I knew how to do was write and who was going to pay me anything approaching a liveable wage to do that now?

Happily, as it turned out, plenty of people. While the market for journalists was collapsing, the market for content was exploding. Of course, I write this with the benefit of 20-20 hindsight for back then I'd never heard of content marketing and failed to recognise it would furnish the foundation stone of a new(ish) career path.

Long story short, around mid 2012 I started doing some work for a mysterious entity that labelled itself as a 'content marketing agency'. It was called King Content and had started up in 2010 as a two-person outfit operating out of a small office in inner city Sydney. (Nowadays it has offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Singapore and London and employs more content providers – on a full-time or freelance contributor basis – than all but the largest Australian media organisations.)

Granted, it could all fall in a heap tomorrow but 30 months down the track I'd estimate I'm working 15 per cent less hours, making 30 per cent more money and enjoying 200 per cent greater job satisfaction.

Anyway, I was soon making enough money writing articles for the banks, credit card companies, insurers and telecoms that made up King Content's clientele to stave off imminent financial catastrophe. And, much to my delight, I soon discovered it wasn't just these newfangled content marketing agencies that were hungry for quality copy and happy to pay handsomely for it. As time went on, I found myself creating content – which was often little different from the journalism I'd previously produced – for custom publishing houses, government departments, educational institutions, marketing companies and PR agencies. What's more, in stark contrast those old-media clients I still did a little work for, they were often happy to pay the hitherto unimaginable sum of \$1 a word and process my invoices with startling alacrity.

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Without wishing to minimise the very real trauma of my colleagues who've had their careers and lives upended during the Great Disruption, I wonder if we media types are guilty of romanticising the past while failing to recognise the opportunities of the present. For instance, even back in the rivers of gold golden days, I wonder just how many journalists walked out of the office on their final day believing they'd been paid fairly, allowed a reasonable work-life balance and been able to practice their craft without having to navigate nest-of-vipers office politics? Give me self-employed journpreneurship over old-school, old-media wage slavery any day. For it's an incredibly exciting time to be a content provider.



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Nigel Bowen

[\(http://walkleys.com/commsdirect/commsdirect-speakers/nigel-bowen/\)](http://walkleys.com/commsdirect/commsdirect-speakers/nigel-bowen/), director of Content Sherpa, is a journalist who transitioned into more commercial forms of writing after spending 15 years working for many of Australia's best-known newspapers and magazines.

Steven will be speaking at CommsDirect on August 7 on the “[How to Double Your Income](http://walkleys.com/commsdirect/program/how-to-double-your-income/) (<http://walkleys.com/commsdirect/program/how-to-double-your-income/>)” panel.

Tickets are just \$395 for those working in media or the not-for-profit sector and \$495 for corporate: \$100 off the regular price!

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