

We receive countless emails from eager travel-blogging readers who ask “When should I try to monetize my blog?” and “What is the best way to monetize my blog so that it will make money?”

These are the very same questions that I plugged into Google a thousand times when we first started Goats On The Road.

Today, Goats On The Road [earns over \\$10K / month](#) because we were able to answer this question and unlock the key to our blog’s success. I strongly believe that every blog has this same potential, but it’s not always easy to unlock it.

In this PDF download, I’m going to share some of my secrets and try to help you find the key to your blog’s earnings by showing you the best time to monetize and how you can maximize your profits through different earning methods. Here it goes!

When Should You Monetize Your Blog?

This is an age-old question, but to be honest, it's really up to you as a blogger. That's a frustrating answer I know, and one that you could find on every blog about blogging, so I'm going to go much more into depth.

Some travel bloggers would argue that it's best to monetize right away so that your readers are used to seeing ads on your site and you can start earning money (albeit very small amounts) before you really have a significant audience.



Other bloggers would say that it's best to grow an audience first, gain their trust, show them that you're offering content of great value and then try to recommend some products and services once you've gained some credibility with your readers.

Personally, I'm a believer of the latter and I don't believe it's a good idea to bother your readers with ads at any time during your entrepreneurial journey. There are simply too many better ways to

make money from your travel blog these days. There's no need to annoy people with Google AdSense, banner ads and pop-ups.

So, if you were to follow my lead and wait until you have some kind of following before monetizing, how many readers per month should you have before you monetize? There really isn't an exact answer for this, and it entirely depends on the niche that you choose, how credible you are in that niche and how engaged your audience is.



Everyone loves solid numbers though, so I would say that if you need an absolute value in your analytics, 10,000 unique visitors / month is a good place to start. Once you have this amount of readers on your blog, you have started to make a name for yourself in the industry.

You have enough readers coming to your site to garner some level of social proof and your following at this point likely trusts what you say.

Visitors per month may not be the best metric to use however. If you're writing extremely engaging articles and your followers are more loyal, you could probably start earning money at 5,000 uniques / month, especially if most of those readers are return visitors.

If you find that when you write an article on your blog it gets a lot of comments (10 or more) and people share it on social media,

you may have already gained more of a monetizable audience than you think.



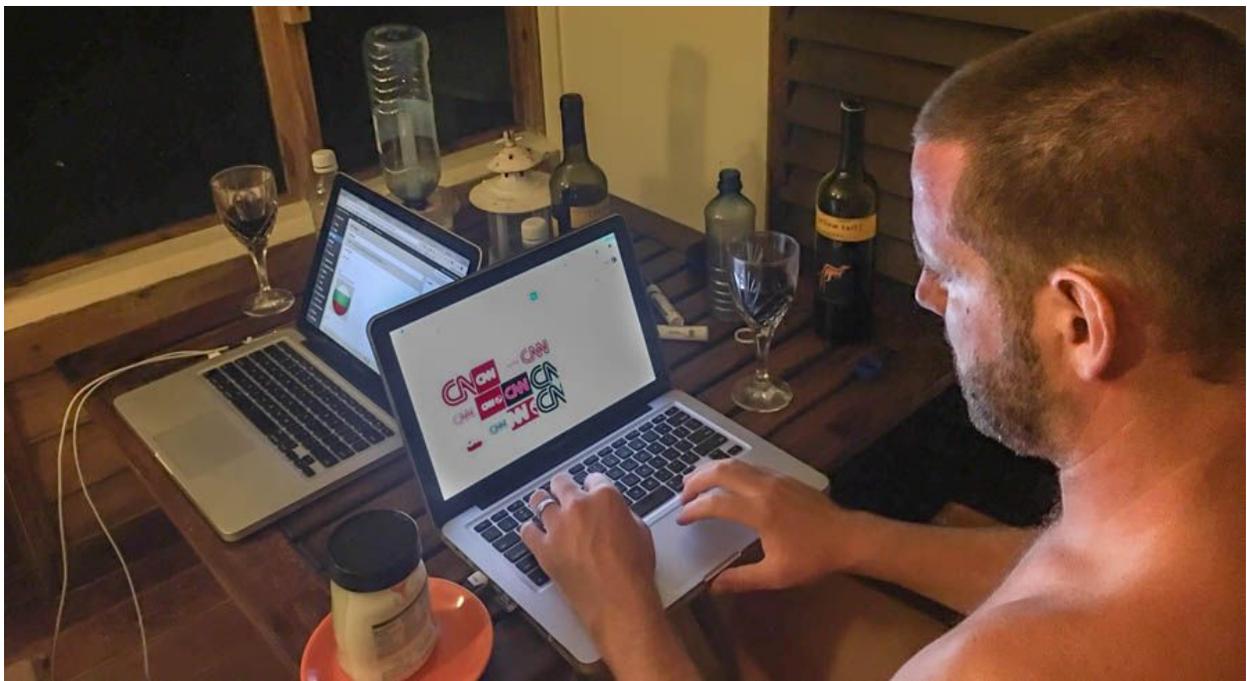
Keep an eye on your readers, find out what they like and what makes them engage. Value them based on their overall engagement and not strictly on the numbers, and you may be able to tap into a resource long before some other bloggers are able to capitalize on their audiences.

Your audience is different! They're following you for *you*. Tap into that and you could start earning money sooner rather than later. If you're able to offer them something of extreme value and they trust you, then it's a win-win for everyone.

How Do You Monetize a Blog?

The best way that you can [monetize a travel blog](#) it is to diversify.

That's right, there's no "one way" to monetize. The only way to make money is to expand and try every method possible to see what works.



Another frustrating answer I know, but I'm going to go beyond that.

I'm going to list most of the ways that bloggers use to monetize their sites, and then I'll go over a few of my favourite and least favourite ones in more detail.

1. **Sponsored Content:** Most blogs start profiting in this way. A company basically contacts you via email (or you reach out to them) and ask to write a review about their product or brand. They pay for this review and the link to their site (between \$200 – \$750 USD / article). More about why this is a bad practice later in this PDF.
2. **Affiliate Sales:** Instead of getting paid for the link, a better way to arrange payment is via commission. Affiliate marketing is when you link to a product or service from your blog and when one of your readers makes a purchase through your link, the company tracks it and sends you a percentage of the sale.
3. **eBooks & Product Sales:** Pretty self-explanatory. You write a book or create a product and sell it to your blog readers.
4. **Content Creation & Freelance Writing:** Many bloggers write articles for other websites and are paid per post. This can range from \$25 – \$500 / piece.
5. **Social Media & Blog Management:** You take over a company's social media or blog and get paid for it.
6. **Banner Ads:** We are strongly against these (you'll never see any on our site), but they're basically flashy ads that are placed

around your blog, when someone clicks / purchases, you get paid.

7. **Twitter Chats:** Once you have a lot of Twitter followers, brands will contact you to host their Twitter chat. These typically pay around \$300 each and last 1 hour.
8. **Sponsored Social Sharing:** A brand will contact you and ask you to share their brand or product on your social media. Depending on your numbers, these can be charged at around \$200 / share.
9. **Instagram Takeover:** Basically, you post your own photos on another company's Instagram account. You promote the takeover on your own account, and engage with the followers during the duration of the takeover. Typically this is paid per image at around \$200 / photo depending on your influence, and the company's budget.
10. **Brand Ambassadorships:** A brand asks you to continuously use their product / service and write about it, and they pay you a monthly salary.
11. **Press Trips:** A tourism board or tour company invites you to their country to write about your experiences. They do this because your blog has large numbers and they want to introduce your readers to their tour or destination. The deal typically includes flights, all transport, food, travel and entertainment for the duration of the trip and you can charge for your services on top of this (upwards of \$3,500 / two-week trip).
12. **Something that hasn't been thought of yet:** The key to being a successful blogger is to be creative. There are a ton of bloggers coming up with new income streams every day. Step out of the box and try something new.

The Best Monetization Methods

Now it's time to break down my favourite ways to earn money from blogging. These are the best travel blog monetization methods that actually work.

Affiliate Marketing

You really can't beat affiliate marketing as a way of earning money. Once you have the posts and pages set up on your site, you can be earning money while you're asleep, while you're out drinking wine or while you're in a bus between travel destinations.

Dariece and I recently went on a four-day jungle trek to the Ciudad Perdida in [Colombia](#). We were completely offline and didn't even think about our blog or business for the entire time we were hiking to the lost ruins. When we came back, we checked

our emails and we had earned over \$500 from affiliate sales. It just doesn't get any better than that!



To maximize your affiliate earnings, it's important that you are passionate about the things you recommend and you write your copy (articles with recommendations) in a way that conveys your satisfaction with the product, service or brand to your readers.

One of our best affiliate earners on our Goats On The Road Blog is website hosting. [We recommend starting a blog with](#) a lot of passion because we honestly believe that it's the best thing we've ever done in our lives. This passion for travel blogging comes through in our posts and that is why we are able to convert readers to start their own blogs. We're just being honest... and it works!

On a good month, Goats On The Road can earn nearly \$4,000 from affiliate sales alone. That means that \$4,000 came while we were sleeping, drinking, travelling or trekking! If you want to build a blog with a passive income model (a lot of money with less work), then you should definitely focus a considerable amount of energy on honing your affiliate marketing and copywriting skills.



Of course, it's true that traffic helps affiliate sales. If you only have 10 people visiting your site every day, then you'd have to convert at a rate of 10% just to get one sale per day. At first, your blog may not make very much money from affiliate marketing, but over time, as it grows, you'll start to see your sales and income grow with it.

This is the great thing about blogging and particularly affiliate marketing. It's a natural progression. The longer your blog is online and the more content it has, the more Google will index it, the more you'll build an audience and – consequently – the more money you'll make.

Some of my favourite affiliates are [Bluehost](#) & Siteground (as mentioned earlier), Amazon, MyTefl, [World Nomads](#) Travel Insurance, Trusted House Sitters and HostelWorld.

If you've already learned [how to start a travel blog](#), chosen your [travel blog name](#), and it's up and running, try your hand at affiliate marketing. Sign up for [Affiliate Window](#) and start requesting affiliates for your blog. Be mindful of what your readers like. If you are a scuba diving blog, try selling dive computers and masks. If you're an adventure blog, maybe adventure tours and GoPros would sell well.



Test your audience and see what they like. Who knows, maybe you could be earning some money in your sleep tonight!

Consulting

One of the unforeseen byproducts of our blogging careers was the immense amount of knowledge that we've accrued over the years and just how valuable that knowledge is to bigger companies. Our current consulting services are mostly in blog and social media management.

Since we started blogging in 2012, we've managed to gain a lot of social media followers and write numerous posts that have done very well on social media and in Google. Big companies are happy to pay someone to help them achieve the same results.



We currently run social media and blog management for numerous companies and we now have a team of writers to help us produce great content in a variety of niches. This method of earning isn't quite as passive as affiliate marketing, but because

we have writers and assistants helping us with the workload, we are able to spend less time on the work ourselves.

Once you've grown your blog and you have experience with running an online business, you can offer consulting services in a variety of ways. You could do blog and social media management like us, or you could teach other bloggers how to grow their audiences and charge for it. You could help travellers start on their adventures, create a writing course, or you could teach photography classes.

There are many ways that you could use your skills to help others and in turn, make a bit of extra cash.

Brand Ambassadorships & Press Trips

This is something that almost all bloggers and travellers dream of. Having tourism boards fly you in for free and enjoy an all expenses paid trip around a destination, or having companies pay you to use their services, wear their clothing or promote their brand.



It's a lot of fun for sure, but there is a considerable amount of work involved in this type of partnership and I would not call it "passive" at all. As I've mentioned many times before on the Goats On The Road blog, you're not really getting "free travel". You're working and in exchange you'll get a free trip and most likely a salary as well.

Generally, if a country invites you on a press trip for example, they'll expect that you produce 5 social shares / day, a couple of articles, dozens of photos and potentially a video and Instagram Story / Snapchat / Facebook Live video as well. This may sound quite easy, but these jobs add up and when you're doing back to back press trips it can feel like a ton of work.

I put Press Trips and Brand Ambassadorships as one of my favourite earning methods, but only because we're able to send our writers on the trips on our behalf.



We recently sent a writer on an amazing trip to Beijing!

Our writers then choose which experiences match the voice on our blog and write about the trips in that way. We would never go on a free trip that didn't make sense for the Goats On The Road blog or our readers.

Some bloggers take great pride in going on "free press trips" and having lots of "campaigns" to work on, but in reality, unless you're

sending writers in your place, and you're earning a salary for the trip, there are far better ways to make money (such as the two listed above).

Nevertheless, being flown around the world on someone else's expense can be a lot of fun and it's definitely nice to meet and network with other bloggers. This is all part of living the travel blogger dream life!

The Worst Earning Methods

As I said before, Press Trips could potentially fall into this category as well, depending on how you go about them, but there are some far worse earning methods for bloggers. Some of them teeter on the edge of bad ethically, while others simply aren't efficient enough to be viable. Here are a few of my least favourite earning methods.



Sponsored Posts

If you're making the majority of your income through sponsored posts, you should stop as soon as possible. As a blogger, Google is your God and by publishing sponsored content frequently, you are a blasphemer.

Eventually you will anger the Google Gods and you could lose everything. Your earnings should be made primarily through

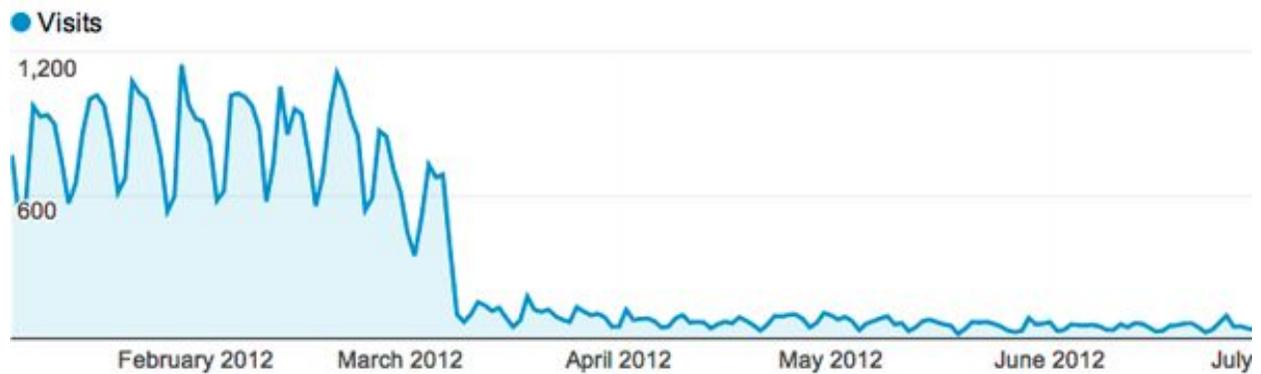
affiliate sales, product sales, content creation, consulting and the other methods we listed previously.

If you are sharing travel related products that you personally like, and the link back to the company is “no-follow”, then that’s a different story.

But, some bloggers will take absolutely any amount of money given to them and frequently publish posts about vacuums, microwaves and mattresses on their travel blogs. This is simply asking for trouble and to be honest, it’s not ethical to take money in exchange for promoting irrelevant products on your blog. Household products make no sense to your travel focused readers.

The only products and services that you should ethically promote on a travel blog are... go figure... travel related!

Your readers have built up trust with you and if you're constantly writing about stuff that doesn't match your brand, you'll eventually lose them all.



You never want to see this in your analytics

If you've ever read or heard somewhere that it's possible to earn a full-time income from sponsored posts, it's true. But you shouldn't earn the majority of your income this way.

If you must earn some income from these types of posts, make sure that they are relevant to your niche, that the link back to the company is “no-follow”, and that it makes up no more than 10% of your overall income. As soon as you can afford it, you should try to stop altogether.

Banner Ads

While I used to be against ads in general, the technology of advertising has become so great that I do recommend bloggers consider using ad services like MediaVine.

You'll need to grow your blog to around 25,000 monthly page views before they'll accept your application, but once you're in the system, you can easily place ads all over your site. If you look at the Goats On The Road blog, you'll notice that there aren't all that many ads, especially when compared to other blogs and websites.

We currently earn around \$2,000 per month from MediaVine (at the time of writing) and we have about 50% of the ads turned off!

If you think your readers wouldn't mind ads, you can sign-up for MediaVine and turn on more ads than we have. MediaVine does an excellent job of making the Ads relevant as well, so your readers shouldn't see ads for Swiffer Sweeper on your website, unless they're interested in buying one!

Hire Help!

As soon as your blog is earning enough, you should consider hiring a VA (Virtual Assistant). If you're doing all of the work, the business simply isn't scalable. You can only do so much and there are only so many hours in a day!

Hire someone who can do the mundane tasks like running posts through social media groups, creating Pinterest images and

proofreading articles. This is stuff that can take a ton of time, but can be done by anyone.

The best thing we ever did was hire our first VA. It freed up time for us to spend on more important parts of the business like finding new clients and expanding our affiliates throughout the website. Since hiring two virtual assistants and a team of writers, we've doubled our earnings.

As soon as you can, you should head to [UpWork](#) or a similar site to find a VA that suits you. You can typically find them for around \$4 / hour. Alternatively, you can ask your friends and family if they'd like to make a little bit of side money at home. You may have to pay them a bit more but it's worth it to have a first-language English speaker.

To Summarize

- You can monetize your site whenever you want, but pay attention to your readers and see what they like and how engaged they are. The more engaged, the more lucrative.
- There are many ways to earn money from blogging, but we suggest focusing on affiliate marketing and eventually consulting.
- If you're currently making money from sponsored posts, you should be expanding your portfolio so that you can earn an income from better methods.
- One of the best ways to grow your income is to hire someone to do mundane tasks so that you can free your time to expand your business.



To earn a \$10K / month or more from blogging, you really have to expand your portfolio and broaden your horizons. Most bloggers who earn this much income are earning it through multiple channels.

Get creative! Think of ways that you can earn money that other people haven't thought of yet. Pitch potential partners with new and exciting ideas and always remember the value that you have in your knowledge and your online reach.

Speak to your audience. Learn what they like and offer them exactly what they want. That way your monetization methods aren't just earning you money, but they're helping thousands of your readers achieve something that's of value to them.

Your blog *is* a business. Treat it like one and you'll be making good money from it in no time.