

How To Research And Write Content Super F.A.S.T.

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How To Research And Write Content Super F.A.S.T.

Introduction

Usain Bolt is fast. Rocket travel is fast. Speeding bullets are fast. Researching and writing content can be too! Whether you write articles, blog posts, reports, ebooks, newsletters, or a dozen other types of content, writing is a part of your business if you're in business online.

Want to learn how to speed up the writing process without sacrificing quality? Of course! Who wouldn't want to crank out article after article faster than before with the same (or improved!) end result?

In today's report I'm going to share a F.A.S.T. method for both researching what to write about in your next content piece AND for actually watching words appear on your computer screen as you write it.

I'll break it into two parts...

- 1. How To Research Content F.A.S.T.***
- 2. How To Write Content F.A.S.T.***

Writing content is one of my favorite things to do. I'd like it to become yours as well.

Whether you are a newcomer who is looking for ideas on how to get started writing fast and writing well, or a seasoned veteran who is always on the search for ways to make your own writing experience better, this module is sure to provide some great insights.

Here we go...

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How To Research Content F.A.S.T.

Writing an article means knowing your subject matter. We've all read enough bad articles to know that poor information ruins the credibility of the writer. And once that credibility is lost, it's very difficult to regain.

Sometimes research is required in order to be knowledgeable for a given topic.

- **Research is required when you don't know enough about a subject.** No brainer there, right? If you have limited or no experience with a topic, then it's going to be difficult to write anything of substance about it. And fluff just won't cut it. You gotta know what you're writing about.
- **Research is required when you want some new ideas about a subject.** Sometimes you may know the subject matter very well, but just need some inspiration for WHAT to write about. A little research can be a great brainstorming exercise to get the content flowing.

But, really, *research?! I know, I know* – research sounds awful, right? Visions of late nights in a library dance through your head. (If you're old enough to remember what it was like before Google came along. ☺)

Don't worry, I'm going to show you how to do your research for any article using my F.A.S.T.™ system. I'll try to keep it P.A.I.N.L.E.S.S. as well. ☺

F - Feeds
A - Articles
S - Stories
T - Terms

With the power of the Internet, doing research can be very quick. We'll get to that in a moment, but first a quick word about accuracy...

I generally use this system for brainstorming ideas as opposed to gathering facts. That said, if you use the following in for fact-finding, be sure to make certain that your source is credible and accurate.

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Don't assume, "*since it's on the Internet, it must be true.*" Or your own credibility will be hard to regain!

Whether you use these tools for brainstorming or fact-finding, here are my favorite four ways to find out what you need to know...

F.A.S.T.[™]

F – FEEDS. I love bloggers. They are a constant source of inspiration and data, available in droves for just about every topic imaginable. I love scanning post titles for information related to articles that I am writing to get the creative juices flowing.

I do this in two ways that I'd like to recommend to you...

- **Apps.** There are a large number of mobile and computer apps available that pipe, group and archive posts from an innumerable amount of categorical blog feeds. I personally use NewsRack on my Mac. Feel free to look around to see what best suits your needs. I locate active blogs related to any specific subject that I often write about and add it to the app in an appropriate category. (Ex. Leadership) Each day I look at the posts that have been added and "star" those with titles that I think would be useful for future reference. Whenever I am ready to organize ideas for an article, I look at the "starred" articles in the category related to my article – and have dozens of ideas at my disposal.
- **Google.** Another option, which is quicker if you need "instant" information, is to use Google's blog search at <http://www.google.com> Simply type in keywords or phrases related to your article topic (+blog) and you should receive a large listing of relevant posts. Look at the titles listed and click through to those that seem to be the best fit for the information you are seeking. HINT: I open these in new browser windows so I can keep the main search page active instead of constantly hitting "back". This is an excellent way to get fresh information. You can also hone in on more precise information by adding relevant details. Example: Instead of searching for "productivity" you can search for "productivity tips".

You could skip the remaining three methods of research that I'm going to share and concentrate solely on "feeds" if you chose to do so. You'd almost certainly never run out of information!

But, there are also other things I do to research. Up next...

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A – ARTICLES. Reading other people's articles is a great way to get ideas for your own. As with all other areas of research, it will simply mean sifting through all available content to find the information that works to spark your own creativity.

There are a lot of ezine article "directories" (Think "search engine for articles") where you can search by keyword or by category to find relevant articles. As these ezine article directories are constantly changing (IE closing up shop, being bold out, repositioned, etc.) I'm not going to list many specific links. Let me give you three suggestions for finding ezine articles to read...

- EzineArticles.com. This is one of the oldest and most stable – if it ever goes away, just email me and let me know. ☺
- Google.com, Part 1: Go to Google.com and search for "ezine article directory" or "ezine article directories" and you should find some links to click through to current directories.
- Google.com, Part 2: To narrow in on articles (without finding a directory) you can search for "keyword/phrase + articles". Example: "parenting articles" or "dog training articles" or "weight loss articles". This should give you plenty of options to research.

The question is: how do you use these articles to "research"? What is it that you actually do when you are reviewing the articles? Let me tell you three things that I do in reading other people's articles...

1) Look at the PURPOSE. The first thing I look at is the purpose of the articles. In other words, what are the articles ABOUT? I look at the topics being shared in the articles to get ideas for what I should write about. Example: I might want to write an article about "parenting" but don't really have anything specific in mind. When I read through entries related to parenting I find many subjects and choose "the value of consistency" as the topic for my own article.

2) Look at the POINTS. I always enjoy reading through the major points being shared an article for ideas on what to write about. I especially love looking at "top 10 lists" (or other numbered lists) because they share lots of tiny ideas that I can pick from to expand upon in my own articles. I never use the

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same ideas shared in one specific article, but rather pick and choose ideas from many different articles that I'd like to include in some form.

3) Look at the PRESENTATION. Another key idea for me is to look at the way the content is presented in the article. I look for creative angles that can be used in a similar way in my own articles. For example: Years ago I saw a series of articles related to a subject line weight loss ... A is For Appetite. B is For Body. C is For Calories. And so forth. This led me to create a series related to internet marketing ... A is For Affiliate. B is For Blogging. C is For Content. And so forth.

Let me give you just a quick case study of how you might put this all together...

***CASE STUDY:** Suppose you search through articles and find a "top 10 ways to lose weight fast". You select three of these "ways" as the foundation of your article. Then, you create an acronym (N.O.W. to add some originality. N = NEVER quit. O = ORGANIZE your plan. W = WORK hard. You've got the makings of How To Lose Weight N.O.W. that you can write. Research converted into an actual original article.*

That's how I use articles. There are also...

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S – STORIES. New stories can be a great way to not only brainstorm ideas for your articles, but also can be included to actually form some of the content...

- I read about a man in NYC who...
- A September 2012 Newsweek article stated...
- Weeks before the election, Gallup polls showed...
- One of the most inspiring things I ever saw was...
- According to the Chicago Tribune...
- Research indicates...
- This Tweet (or Facebook® post) got me to thinking...

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There are countless stories floating around from minor to major outlets that can get ideas flowing or serve as quotes and foundations upon which you write your article.

Where do you find them? Let me suggest four quick places...

1) Your favorite news source. I review FoxNews.com, CNN.com, ABCnews.com and a variety of other websites on a daily basis to get my "fix" of current events. Whatever your flavor, refer to webpage (or app) of your favorite news source.

2) Curated content. There are a lot of "curation" news sites available to review as well. These sites gather the top news stories from many different sources and either report on them or simply refer to them. One of my favorites is HuffingtonPost.com. You can search Google for others.

3) Social media. Facebook and Twitter can be a fun source for "news", especially when you are following or liking major reporting services and pages. The around the clock updates can be offer many ideas for your consideration.

4) Google News. Of course, news.google.com offers a homepage filled with the latest news from around the world, plus has a searchable database of previous news stories. All in all, one of the best research sites available.

Use stories to kick-start your ideas AND possibly quote small portions for your actual article.

That leaves us with one final idea...

F.A.S.T.[™]

T – TERMS. One of the best things you can do to research a subject is search for terms at Google.com. I've mentioned this one last for two reasons: First, because it can be the most time-consuming of the four methods. Second, because it fits with my "t" which comes last in the acronym. ☺

I love Google.com. It's a great site to simply type in keywords and phrases to search for information on literally every imaginable topic. Like I said, it can be time-consuming to sift through all of the information, but it never leaves you void of ideas.

Use the following five search combinations to fine-tune your results...

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- How to + keyword/phrase (“How to lose weight”)
- Keyword/phrase + tips (“weight loss tips”)
- Ways to + keyword/phrase (“Ways to lose weight”)
- Top 10 + keyword/phrase (“top 10 weight loss”)
- Keyword/phrase + strategies/plans/blueprint/formula (“weight loss plan”)

Consider also adding words like these: best, 2017, how I, case study, example, list, ideas, etc.

***RESOURCE:** One other site worth mentioning in relation to searching “terms” is Wikipedia.com. While you do need to be careful about the credibility of some entries, this is an excellent place to generate ideas.*

So, that’s how to research an article using my F.A.S.T.[™] method.

Before we close out, I do want to mention a couple of very important things concerning “research”...

Warning #1: Don’t steal content. You can gather ideas and get inspiration from other people’s content, but don’t simply copy and paste their stuff. And that includes simply rewriting their exact article in your own words. That’s not research, that’s theft. Use these research strategies to brainstorm ideas that you use to create your own completely original articles.

Warning #2: Cite your source. If you find something that you want to include in your own article, seek permission first. And if you’re going to quote something from an existing content piece, make sure you do so exactly and reference where the quote originated.

Bottom line is this: when you write articles you don’t want anyone simply taking your own and rehashing it as their own. So, don’t do that to others.

Use these research methods to get your creative juices flowing.

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How To Write Content F.A.S.T.

Writing content, specifically articles, is a fundamental part of most businesses.

Whether it's information that you sell or information used in marketing, mastering the art of writing quality content should be a priority for all business owners.

This is especially true of those who sell information based products and services.

Most people who write for a living in any form are good at what they do. They must be in order to stay in business! The problem most face isn't in the quality they can produce, *but rather in how quickly they can produce that quality.*

In other words, few people can write well and write fast at the same time. They usually do one or the other.

What I want to share with you in this lesson is **how to do both**. That is, how to write quickly without sacrificing quality. I'll be sharing my own proprietary F.A.S.T.™ system...

F - Format
A - Analysis
S - Support
T - Text

It's not uncommon for me to write 500-700 word articles in ten minutes or less using this system. I wrote this entire lesson (an "extended" article) in about twenty minutes using the F.A.S.T.™ system. You'll find that I "practice what I preach" in crafting the very words you are reading.

We'll look at each of these parts of the system in just a moment, but first I want to mention that this system is strictly for writing content, specifically articles in the 500-700 word range, very quickly and professionally.

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You will, of course, need to use your normal editing and proofreading process for correcting grammar, punctuation and usage errors.

That said, let's look at the F.A.S.T. system.

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F – FORMAT. It all begins with using an arranged structure that you base and build your article upon. That is, you identify the KIND or TYPE of article that you want to write.

Writing a step-by-step "how to" article will be different than writing a tips list article which in turn is much different than writing an opinion article or case study article.

Your format is the first step. Sadly, this is where many people get stuck and find it difficult to get started writing. They spend too much time trying to decide what KIND of format to use for their article.

In order to make this truly a "fast" decision, I developed a list of 30 article topic and title templates that I use anytime I want to write an article. I simply pick one based on what I want to write and the foundation is set almost instantly.

Here they are for your own use...

1. How to [Benefit] In [Number] Easy Steps

How to Add Distance to Your Drive In Two Easy Steps

2. [Number] Simple Ways to [Benefit]

Three Simple Ways to Get More Backlinks

3. The Truth About [Niche Topic]

The Truth About Making Money Online

4. How [Activity/Thing] Can Lead to [Benefit]

How Writing an Article Every Day Can Lead to a Six Figure Income

5. [Number] Surefire Ways to [Benefit]

Seven Surefire Ways to Lose Ten Pounds

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6. The Quick and Easy Way to [Benefit]

The Quick and Easy Way to Improve Your Golf Swing

7. [Number] Mistakes to Avoid When You're Trying to [Benefit/Niche Topic]

Three Mistakes to Avoid When You're Trying to Lose Weight

8. The Secrets of [Benefit]

The Secrets of Becoming a Highly Paid Offline Consultant

9. [Number] Ways to [Benefit] That Work Like Magic

Two Ways to Flatten Your Stomach That Work Like Magic

10. What [Group] Doesn't/Don't Want You to Know About [Topic]

What Your Golfing Partners Don't Want You to Know About Shaving Strokes Off Your Game

11. Why You Should [Do Some Activity]

Why You Should Add Value to Your Affiliate Offers

12. [Number] Simple Tips That Will [Benefit]

Three Simple Tips That Will Double Your Conversion Rate

13. [Number] Secrets [Group] Knows About [Benefit/Topic]

Ten Secrets Celebrities Know About Losing Weight Fast

14. [Number] Tips and Tricks for/to [Benefit]

Three Tips and Tricks to Starting a Popular, Profitable Blog

15. Who Else Wants to [Benefit]?

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Who Else Wants to Housetrain Their Puppy in 24 Hours?

16. How to [Benefit] Without [Negative Thing/Work]

How to Make Money Online Without Being Chained to Your Computer

17. Discover How to [Benefit]

Discover How to Keep Your Dog Flea Free

18. [Number] [Niche Topic] Tips That Work Wonders

Three Search Engine Optimization Tips That Work Wonders

19. Here Are [Number] Surprisingly Easy Ways to [Benefit]

Here Are Five Surprisingly Easy Ways to Eat Fewer Calories

20. [Item] or [Item]: Which One is Right for You?

Affiliate Marketing or Create Your Own Product: Which One is Right for You?

21. How I [Benefited]... And How You Can Too!

How I Added 50 Yards to My Golf Drive... And How You Can Too!

22. Do You Want to [Benefit]?

Do You Want to Lose 20 Pounds Before Summer?

23. How to Get Rid of [Bad Thing] for Good

How to Get Rid of Your Love Handles for Good!

24. [Niche Topic] Tips Every [Group] Ought to Know

Profitable Blogging Tips Every Marketer Ought to Know

25. An Easy [Number] Step Guide to [Benefit]

An Easy Five Step Guide to Writing Killer PPC Ads

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26. [Number] Tips You Can Use to [Benefit]

Three Tips You Can Use to Drop a Dress Size

27. How to [Benefit] By/With/Using [Activity/Thing]

How to Build Your Mailing List Using Twitter

28. From [Starting State/Position] to [Ending State/Benefit] In [Number] Easy Steps

From Size 16 to Size 4 In Three Easy Steps!

29. The Best Way for [Group] to [Benefit]

The Best Way for Writers to Make a Living Online

30. Stop [Bad Thing] Using These [Number] Secrets

Stop Losing Money On AdWords Advertising Using These Three Secrets

These starters should be your "go to" list for every article you want to write, or even chapters for lengthier works. They work for virtually any topic you plan to write about.

***CASE STUDY:** When I wrote this "lesson" I chose the very first template from the list. The template was "How To [Benefit] In [Number] Easy Steps. While I could have simply titled mine, "How To Write An Article In 4 Easy Steps", I tweaked it slightly to include my trademarked brand and settled on "How To Write An Article F.A.S.T."*

Feel free to tweak the template to create your format. Simply pick one – and don't spend a lot of time thinking about this – and move on...

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A – ANALYSIS. After you choose your format, your next step is to quickly analyze how to best present the information in your article to accurately share information that your title indicates.

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There are three things that I want to mention in relation to your "analysis"...

- 1) Divide content into 3-5 major points.** Generally speaking it's best to divide your content into at least three and no more than five major points of discussion. This is considered the "sweet spot" for most reader's attention span and interest. Additionally, if you have many more major points then the amount of detail you can share for each gets very limited in a 500-700 word article. So, choose a number from 3-5, then...
- 2) Decide upon steps, strategies or statements.** How will you arrange your content? If it's a "how to" article or any other kind of sequential or chronological article, then sharing "steps" in proper order is your best option. Another method is to share "strategies" (tactics, ways, practices, techniques, methods, etc.) for accomplishing a desired purpose. And a final idea is "statements" which would include ideas, tips, reasons, shortcuts, secrets, answers, etc. Choose one of these and finally...
- 3) Determine answers to key questions.** To zero in on exactly what the 3-5 major points will be, it's important to answer questions about the subject matter. What steps are required to complete the activity? What are the best ways to accomplish the result? What does the reader need to know about this subject in order to be successful? What are some details that will better explain this subject?

Do you realize what you've done in completing these steps? You've outlined your article. Outlining becomes extremely fast and easy when you simply run through this checklist. In fact, use this enough and, over time, you'll learn to outline naturally with almost no thought.

***CASE STUDY:** You probably noticed that I divided this into FOUR major points. I chose "steps" – chronologically arranged steps that are completed in order. And I answered the primary question, "What steps are required to complete the activity?" I further answered, "What are some details that will better explain this subject?"*

You should have a nice skeleton outline in place at this point. Truthfully, you could go ahead and write it now. But, I like to add in one more element before the words start forming on the page...

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S – SUPPORT. Something that makes writing the article VERY EASY to do is knowing exactly what you're going to write in each of the major point sections.

One of the best ways that I have found to do this is to add TWO TIPS (aka "sub-points") to each of the major point sections. These two tips should support the main point by ...

- ***Explaining.*** They should clarify anything that might be confusing. They should make a point easier to understand. They aren't required to be lengthy, nor are they necessary that you "label" them. They are more for your benefit than anything – to keep you writing. Although I do normally label them because readers tend to assign value to them.
- ***Enhancing.*** Another purpose is for these tips to elaborate on the main point. That is, they improve upon the section. They make it better. They share additional insights that add value to the information shared. By sharing more bits of content, you may very well share the one thing that turns on the light bulb for the reader and really makes the section work for them so they "get it".

Did you see what I just did? I add TWO TIPS to this section. I think you'll find that they both do exactly what they are supposed to do in terms of "explaining" and "enhancing".

CASE STUDY: If you carefully review this article you'll find that all four of my major points have supporting entries. This isn't by chance, it's by design. The writing process is much, much easier for me when I have lots of smaller details to share.

Don't forget what the goal of these tips is: while a secondary goal is to make your article better for the reader, the primary goal in terms of writing "fast" is to give you more ideas for WHAT to write about. When you consider that you only need to write 1-3 sentences for every piece of your outline, the content becomes extremely easy to write. This, as opposed to starting at a blank page and wondering, "what do I write next?"

Try to add a couple of "tips" to support each main point.

Finally...

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T – TEXT. At this point you should have a highly detailed outline in front of you. That's a good thing. Writing now becomes a matter of "filling in the blanks". It really should flow well at this point due to the framework in place.

What I do in terms of writing is this...

- 1) *Decide upon a word count.*** Base the word count of your article upon who will be using it and what their requirements are. For example: some article directories require a specific word count. Some PLR users require a different word count. It's important that you factor this into your writing. How long does the article need to be?
- 2) *Divide the content into equal parts.*** While this doesn't need to be an exact ratio, each of the major points should be approximately the same length. You don't want to have 90% of your content in point number one and have 10% left for points two and three! Try to keep a nice balance in how much content is shared in each of the sections.
- 3) *Develop the article.*** Write it! It's simply a matter of sharing what you know about each of the sections. Explain the major points. This should really be an easy part by now. If you take 10 minutes to outline, then writing should only take 10 minutes. Get the words on the page!

That's how I write my articles F.A.S.T.™ and I know you can too! Begin using these four steps. It may take a few tries to really get into the flow of working through this process, but it will get easier and easier as you practice it.

In time, you'll be cranking out articles quickly ... without sacrificing quality!

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