

# Freelance writing doesn't mean free

**Not always.  
 There are ways to make  
 money by writing.  
 Here's how:**

You're a writer in Bangladesh and you write in English. If you're banking on your talent for a full-time job, you will be hungry more often than your friend who's a business graduate. For those of us who have a day job and want a little something-something on the side out of their ability with the pen, there are quite a few opportunities.

Knowing that time is of essence, there are two paths one can take. Think of it as a video game where you have to choose a path towards your destiny. Unless you're the kind who has no life and can play the game for more than 4 hours a day, then pick both.

**Try being a Blogger**  
 This might seem kind of ridiculous but there is a need for proper bloggers. How would you define a proper blogger? The Oatmeal, Joystiq, LifeHacker—these are blog sites where they host either one or several bloggers. Here in Bangladesh, we have Dhaka Foodies, Rantages.com, Priyo.com and the likes. What is it that sets apart these blogs from your average housewife's "My Housewife Blog?" A Target. No one wants to read about what your kid had for lunch. They might want to read about how to make what your kid had for lunch. When you open a blog, you should be able to describe what your blog in less than five words. The less, the better: Dhaka Foodies—food; Rantages—humour;

Priyo.com—magazine; some of these terms might seem broad but that's where consistency comes into play. The broader your term, the more posts you can make. If it's a one man show, it's good to stick to a niche or something simple like reviewing Bangladeshi phones only. We definitely need a review site for the phones that are only available in Bangladesh. Write about stuff that you would read yourself (reading them because you wrote them doesn't count). Exposure is the second deal. You want to reach out to your target audience. Social media has made it extremely easy for us; you'd have to be a donkey with carrots for ears if you haven't figured it out already. Write your stuff and find the groups on Facebook who are into it. For example, if you're a gamer, share the links of your posts on the group's or the page's wall. Don't just copy-paste the same thing everywhere, use your writing skills to make a personalised post for each share so that the people in the groups feel as if a person shared it and not a

spam

bot. What's the ultimate goal? You can cash in on your popularity and get sponsors or ads. A specific phone brand might want you to review them. That's what



happens when you have more than a 100,000 followers.

**How about a Freelance Writer?**  
 This one's pretty cut and dried. Since you're not a full-time reporter, your best bets are the supplements or the

target pages in a newspaper. For example, if you like culture, write about music and movies for the culture sections. A good rule of thumb is to always write with using actual facts with sources and good grammar. No one wants to know about your repertoire of ethereal words sent from heaven either, write readable stuff and make them short and concise. Treat the editor like a human being. Do not send your article in the body of an email, that makes the entire thing rather messy and it's a dreadful experience for the reader. Attach it as a separate doc file. You wouldn't put your cover letter with your CV, would you? If you send in an article without a by-line or any sort of introduction, you will be treated the same way. Likewise, if you sound like a needy puppy scrapping for a bone, it wouldn't do your credibility any good either. Say hi, and let the editor know why you are writing the piece and why he should publish it. "You should publish this because I think it's very good and I

want the people to know about it!" is not a good reason, it never is. You should judge your work from a perspective. Why should the editor and more importantly, why should the people read the piece? There's a reason you don't come across any reviews of Michael Jackson's Thriller in recent issues of Kerrang! Magazine. Some things are just not relevant anymore and it's no use beating a dead-horse either. Moreover, if you write about Triple H's hairdos for a youth magazine, don't think that it's relevant either. WWE and readers don't really go hand in hand. Maybe hand to hand but not hand in hand. Be accurate, concise, and mindful and know what you're doing and who you're doing it for. With luck, you'll end up as a contributor or even more, and get to write about freelance writing!

*The writer is the editor of Rantages.com and a goat with opposable thumbs.*

RUMMAN R KALAM

## Five business apps to boost your work

Almost everyone owns a smartphone nowadays, and business executives are no exception. Smartphones help these hotshot executives and desk workers stay connected to the world around them, feeding them updates and emails on demand. If you're playing Angry Birds on your i-Phone every chance you get, it's not really the best use of your smartphone in the workplace, is it? Save the gaming for the ride home from work or winding down when you get home, and stock up on the following apps to stay on pace with your work.

**Expensify:** The program tracks your expenditure, on anything, anywhere.



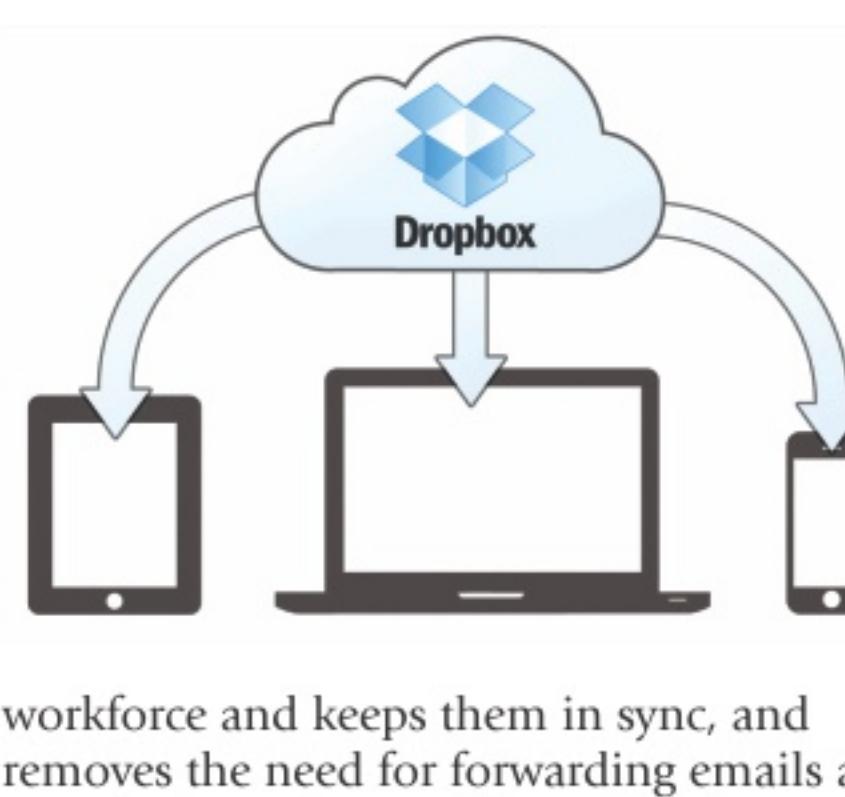
Simplified and watered down for ease of use, it can be used by accountants or messy spenders, and help you keep track of budgets. Streamline the way your employees report expenses, the way expenses are approved, and the way you export that information to your accounting package. Helps you out when you need to plan those pesky office parties and keep track of the expenses. Can be used to

keep track of personal expenses as well, and a good idea if you keep wondering where your salary goes every month.

**Log Me In:** Log in, manage and modify content on any of your devices, on the go. Left an important file back home? Don't

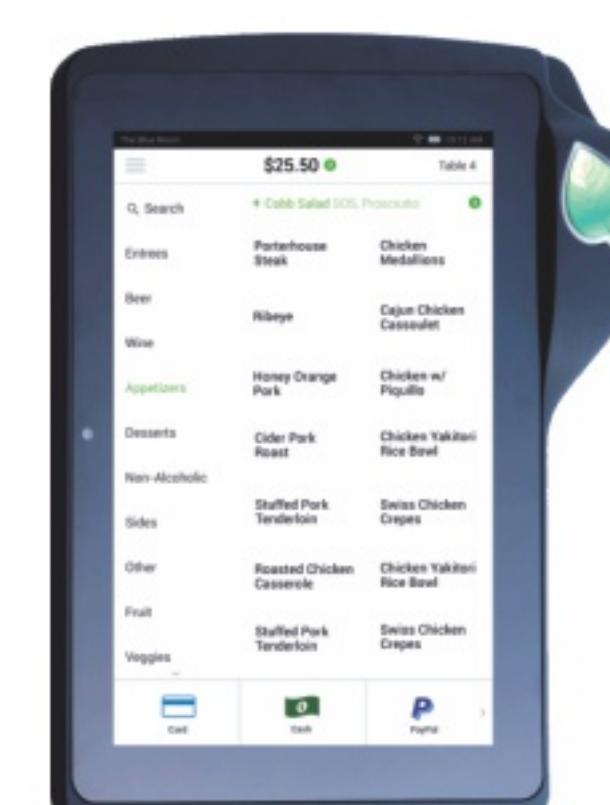
want to sit through another one of the tiring telling-offs from your boss? Use Log Me In to log in to your PC at home from another device and retrieve files at ease from your workplace. The app comes in handy if you're running late and transferring files would otherwise take ages. Just get to the meeting in time, download your presentation to your device using the app, and voila! The app requires syncing with devices, and the other device needs to be turned on for you to retrieve files.

**Dropbox:** A lot like Log Me In, but mostly used for sharing a common storage space between users. The app runs in the background, and every time a file is changed from another location, the file is automatically updated on your computer as well. This helps bringing together an entire



workforce and keeps them in sync, and removes the need for forwarding emails and transferring using pendrives. Dropbox requires an internet connection to work, obviously, but what business executive in this day and age isn't connected to the web?

**Leaf:** This is one for the small scale business owners. The Customer Relations Manager



(CRM) app saves your time by keeping an inventory of your products and takes orders, notifies you, and keeps count of how much money you stand to make. Any range of products you might have, the app molds its services around it. It will also track how well your business is doing, and provide funky, eye-catching graphs, facts and figures if you need to review how you're doing.

**Harvest:** Your employer won't run after you trying to get you to be more productive at the workplace. At best, a couple of warnings later, you will be unceremoniously kicked out, and when you're nursing a bruised behind, you'll



most probably blame your love of surfing through the net for cat memes. Before that happens, get a grip on your online habits using Harvest. The app bombards you with information about your online activity, showing you which sites you waste most of your time on. If you're getting complaints about your work rate, maybe it's time to reassess your priorities, and Harvest tells you where to cut down your online activity.

SHAER REAZ

### TRAINING SCOPE

#### Bank Alfalah to facilitate training to develop smart workforce

Bank Alfalah Limited, a multinational bank with has come forward to support an endeavor to enhance IT-skills of nation's next generation workforce under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program to foster country's tech-aided development. The bank is going to facilitate a training program titled "IT Capacity Building Training (ICBT)" for meritorious students of Higher Secondary Level. NeoSTAR Innovation will conduct this training program while Square Informatix will act as strategic partner of ICBT. The event will take place at Software Technology Park at Janata Tower, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka. In total 6 (six) batches each having 10 (ten) students will undergo a carefully devised two-month long training program free of cost, covering basics to mid level IT topics under this initiative. The first batch of ICBT is expecting to be formed in January 2014. Interested students, willing to be a part of the program are encouraged to forward their CV to apply.icbt@outlook.com within January 31, 2014. Applicants from financially underprivileged community will be given preference.

