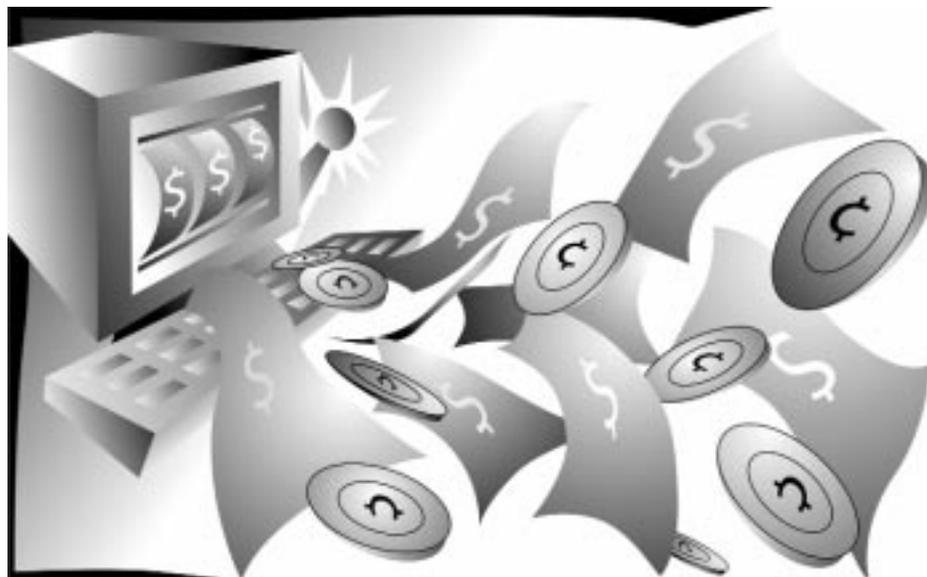# Beyond Personal Computing

The Money Machine

By Harry Husted

You just bought your first computer, and you are excited about using it. Or, you've had your computer for a while now, and have only played video games and kept your finances in order. What can you do with such an intricate and sophisticated machine beyond the simple things?

Did you know that you could use your computer to make money —lots of money? There are more than 10 million people around the world who use their computers to make up to—and sometimes more than—$30,000 a month.

But with so many scams going around, it is hard to figure out whether a computer-related money-making idea is sound. The good news is that there are many personal computer-related occupations that are sound, legal, practical, and worth their weight in gold.

To find out if your home-based computer-business idea is sound and legal, learn from the experts. Some have written books about this very subject.

One such book is *Making Money With Your Computer at Home*, by Paul and Sarah Edwards. This book has a listing of more than 100 computer home businesses that can be started on a shoestring budget. There is also a section on using your computer in business, with practical tips like how to keep track of your money, and making sure you get paid.

Business Opportunities

If you are interested in buying a computer-oriented opportunity instead of starting your own, you can check out *Home Businesses You Can Buy*, cowritten by Paul and Sarah Edwards and Walter Zooi. This book provides in-depth information on legitimate business opportunities available for purchase.

But if you want to start your own business, there are many ideas out there to choose from. The top 10 highest-paying ideas are outlined below:

Astrology charting service: If you believe your fate and destiny are determined by the stars—and are willing to serve other people—this is one of the hottest businesses to start. Rates for this service range from $25 to $75 and up.

Billing and invoicing service: People don't like to spend time doing billing because it is too time-consuming. They'd rather have someone else do it for them. All you need to start this business is a computer, printer, and invoicing software. Fee ranges anywhere from $30 to $50 an hour.

Bookkeeping service: This is a business that can be started at any time. If you know how to keep books, you will make good money. All you need is a good software accounting program like Quick-Books Pro or Peachtree. Typically, bookkeeping services can make between $50,000 and $80,000 a year, and more.

Computer consulting: If you know all about computers, and can repair them or make recommendations, you can do well as a computer consultant. Consultants can make up to $100,000 a year.

Computer repair: Today, there is an ever-greater need for technicians. If you have the right certifications, you can command large fees. Many professionals charge anywhere from $50 to $125 per hour.

Computer trainer: Learning to use computers and getting around on the Internet is fast becoming a necessary aspect of running a successful business. Therefore, trainers are more important than ever. If you are good and know your stuff, you can earn up to $100,000 a year.

Copywriting: Every business or organization needs a copywriter. They all need to have something written to help sell their products. If you know how to write convincingly, you will be in big demand. Copywriters can make up to $175,000 a year, depending on skill level and experience.

Desktop publishing service: Every organization needs business cards, flyers, and brochures. Therefore, anyone working in this area will have plenty of work.

Electronic publicity service: There is a tremendous growth in this market. Online media outlets need these services. Earning potential is somewhere around $75,000 and up per year.

Technical writer: Everywhere you look, there is a need for a technical writer. Businesses need manuals written for their employees. They may not have the time, skills or experience to write the manuals themselves, so they hire technical writers to do it. Most technical writers make around $30 to $50 an hour.

There are many more computer business ideas to choose from. Just look around and read everything before you make a move, so, you can avoid being taken for a ride. ❏