

**So you're a better
science writer.**

Now what?

Why you should write:

For scientists:

Puts you in control

Coverage is good (and often compulsory)

For communicators:

Builds your portfolio

Gets you experience

Sweet side gig (but awful full-time job)

Things to do before you write

Setting up to freelance

Please get paid (if you can)!

Get an ABN (it's not that hard)

You're probably* a sole trader

You probably* don't need to register for GST

*I am not an accountant and this is not financial advice

Looking the part

Get a nice email address.

your.name@gmail.com is fine

contact@yourname.com is amazing

(crazy.bananas.69@hotmail.com is **not ok**)

Your student email vanishes when you graduate!

Looking the part

Get a portfolio...

medium.com/yourname is fine

yourname.com is amazing

...and use it!

A very short blurb about you, your qualifications, your expertise, your interests

A highlights reel (your ~3 best pieces)

Everything else you've written

rockym93 dot net

[index](#) [blog](#) [code](#) [text](#) [misc](#)



Hi! My name's Rockwell McGellin.

Rocky is fine for short, and I'm @rockym93 most places on the internet.

Science for non-expert audiences is kind of my thing. I wrote my [masters thesis](#) on it, I work at my [local planetarium](#) and I [write](#) a bit on the side.

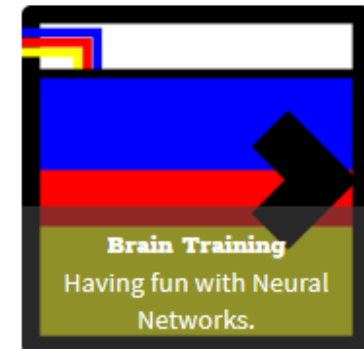
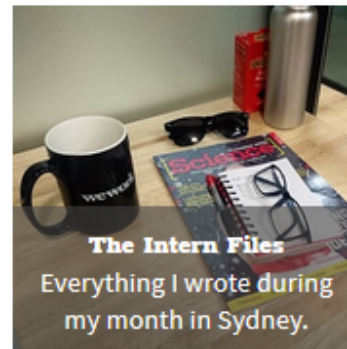
In my spare time I like to [blog](#) and [code](#).

Latest Post

[Chasing Aurora](#): What's the point of travelling anyway?

The Highlights Reel

If you're not sure where to start, try one of these.



Me, but not here

[✉ mail](#) · [✉ telegram](#) · [🐦 twitter](#) · [👤 reddit](#) · [📺 youtube](#) · [🐙 github](#) · [👾 steam](#) · [📖 goodreads](#) · [👁 thingiverse](#) · [🎧 spotify](#) · [🌐 linkedin](#)

Finding stories

Media releases:

www.scimex.org (Australia)

www.eurekalert.org (US)

www.alphagalileo.org (UK)

Direct from universities

Direct from research orgs and government

Direct from journals

Finding stories

Not media releases:

Twitter

Reddit

People you know

Your own research

(especially for The Conversation)

Pitching stories

Know your story

Why is it newsworthy?

What's your angle?

Who will you interview?

Know your publisher

What do they publish?

Who is their target audience?

What is their tone and style?

Pitching stories

Who are you?

Two sentences, tops

Mention any relevant expertise

Where can they find some work samples?

Pitching stories

What's your story?

What's your topic?

What is your hook, your angle, your 'nut graph'?

Why is it newsworthy or important?

Why should *they* run this story?

Why should *you* write it for them?

Pitching stories

What can you bring?

Who will you interview?

Do you already have quotes?

Do you have media to go with it? Photos? Videos?

What else can you offer?

Infographics? Amazing art skills? Interactives? Social followers?

Access to experts or unreleased papers (but **be careful!**)

Pitching stories

What do they need to do?

When should they get back to you?

How many words do they want?

What kind of deadline do they want?

Do they need you to sign a contract?

**Your pitch needs to
showcase your writing.**

[theopennotebook.com](http://theopennotebook.com/pitch-database)
[/pitch-database](http://theopennotebook.com/pitch-database)

Following up a pitch

It's okay to follow up, but **don't be annoying.**

It's okay to pitch somewhere else, but **tell them.**

A no is no to this piece, **not to you as a writer.**

If you get commissioned, **stick to your brief.**

The fun part:
write your thing!

After you submit

They will tell you what to do.

Some places will send you revisions

Some places will edit your piece for you

You can suggest a headline, but they might change it.

Once they accept it, you should send an invoice.

Invoicing*

- The word ‘invoice’
- The date it was issued
- Your details & ABN
- Their details
- What you sold them
- How much it cost
- What the total is (& GST)
- How they can pay you

*Still not an accountant,
still not financial advice.

invoice #1

invoice

16 June 2017

To

Freelance article x2
 www.rockwellmcgellin.com.au

For

Freelance article x2

Rockwell McGellin
 ABN 46213220063

16/06/2017
 16/06/2017

rockwell@mcgellin
 (+61) 08 9412 1234

Story title	Publication	Word count	Rate	Amount (AUD)
Tag Team (4H Ear Tag Profile)	Careers with Code (US)	350	65c/word	227.50
The Big Picture (CS + Ag feature)	Careers with Code (US)	300	65c/word	195.00
GST				0.00
Total				422.50

Payment details
 Rockwell McGellin

BSB 083-000

Account 123456789

Please forward payment within 14 days.

Thank you!

Invoicing*

Don't forget to include it on your tax return!

There's a section for sole trader income.

It's pretty easy as a side gig, but talk to an accountant if you end up hitting the big leagues.

*Still not an accountant,
still not financial advice.

When the piece is published

They probably own the copyright now. :(

Share it – more views makes you look good

Put it on your portfolio

If it's your (or a friend's) research, be prepared for more enquiries.

Rinse and repeat!

Where to publish?

If your story isn't picked up, write it anyway.

Run your own site.

Publish straight to your portfolio.

Medium (medium.com) has great network effects.

Questions?

If you think of any later, shoot me an email at rockwell@mcgell.in or twitter me at [@rockym93](https://twitter.com/rockym93)