

◆ "Punchy, interesting • When's the next? • Fun read • Sandy's perfect for humour in writing" /client enjoyed this feedback from readers of her first business' e-zines written by Sandy  
◆ "Will share [her] words, as always, with a smile • Well done, very readable • Her columns make me laugh; the way she weaves words • Love getting her e-zine". /readers of Sandy's [QuillJoy](#)

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Sprinkle Humour as a Hook  
by [Sandy Ross.ca](#) 519.871.word (9673)

for [The Londoner](#) column on home business 500-word  
Home Alone – Not Lonely

Remember Macaulay in Home Alone films, slapping cherubic cheeks as he screams blue murder by the bathroom mirror? Sure, alone is traumatic at 12, but freeing, even fantasy-come-true, in adulthood. Then, the honeymoon's over, and the whole idea of doing business from the bedroom (not what you're thinking) has gone from inspiration to isolation.

Take my own home invasion. Think early 1990s, the fallout of the first firings (sorry, 'restructuring'), and I'm one of 100 leaving my employer. Monday morn, apres downsizing and I am – like that Culkid kid – home alone.

OK. This is good. I have time to think, to hear myself think. Minutes pass, as do three cups of tea through my bladder. Slippers feel good? Yup. Sweats too tight? Nope. I think this will work. No chatty peers peering in my cubicle to visit. No office gossip or politics. No suck-up competition to be last to leave. Then, delusions of grandeur dissolve into micro biz reality and there you sit: a home-based entrepreneur.

Corporate phones once despised for flashing, lines lit like airport runways, are now begged to ring. You send envelopes to yourself so a courier will come and you'll see another human. Postal carriers – be afraid. We wait with warm muffins or cold lemonade, hoping you'll linger. Of course, this is about the time the in-laws start dropping by... with the dogs... in crocheted outfits (the pets, not the relatives). Should have wished for clients, not company.

But, all at home is not hopeless. Homepreneurs have many ways to handle the solitude of soloing. Investment rep, David Beach, reflects on inspiring prose for renewal. Dani Howarth, in secretarial services, finds her guinea pigs and dogs to be *"the best listeners, agreeing with everything"*. Life coach, Anouschka Gentner, tries a change of scenery, from keyboard to backyard. *"I watch birds and squirrels, and my cat and I decide we live a good life."* What's with all these animals; are they the answer? HR specialist, Sandra Safran, suggests *"meeting a colleague for lunch or coffee at least twice a month..."* ➔

*... If you discuss business, you can expense part"*. Interior decorator, Tracey White, relies on networking groups plus email to *"share ideas and time with like-minded people"*. And what of music? Promotions supplier, Carroll Sturgeon, enjoys the company of Barry White (Manilow for me, please). Ending on a philosophical look at this loneliness thing, Carroll reminds us of perks. She accomplishes far more now, even with fridge trips and cat naps. Besides, she muses, *"I'm not alone – simply with myself"*. ◆

Reviews of websites 150-word, for [IABC](#) business communicators

For a library theme, let's venture virtually to one of the world's oldest: to England's Oxford, to [Bodleian Library](#). As Canada's National Library marks 50 years, Bodleian just turned 400. My last trip over 'ome, it didn't even look 250. Its website posts its history, snaps of commanding architecture, lists of souvenirs with Bodleian logos or Oxford blues, and impressive Library stats. Boasting seven million volumes, five million are referenced online, and about a million sit on 120 miles of shelves. Thirty reading rooms seat 2,663 and, thanks to 382 staff, the average time to fulfil a book order's just three hours. It took longer to get complimentary nuts on the flight over (which, coincidentally, were also 400 years old). ◆

[Bartleby](#) A marriage of online and storytime, it archives invaluable literary treasures. Tuck into Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment, or the Theory of Relativity, by Einstein, or The Bible, by... you know. In a convergence of digital meets Dewey decimal, full content's keyed-in for classic Verse, Reference, Fiction, Nonfiction – from grammatical stylings of Strunk, to encyclopedias that would fascinate Funk (and Wagnall). When I saw Gray's Anatomy was online, I felt a twinge of what it must be like to be a 12-year old boy with a Playboy magazine under his mattress (or Hugh Heffner, who keeps it under his mistress). With a titillating Table of Contents laid out like a naked body buffet, I couldn't resist sneaking a peek at Primitive Segments. Surprisingly, the lateral aspect occipital isn't nearly as sexy as it sounds. But, for education, information, and inspiration, Bartleby is a bookworm's dream... a good read. ◆