

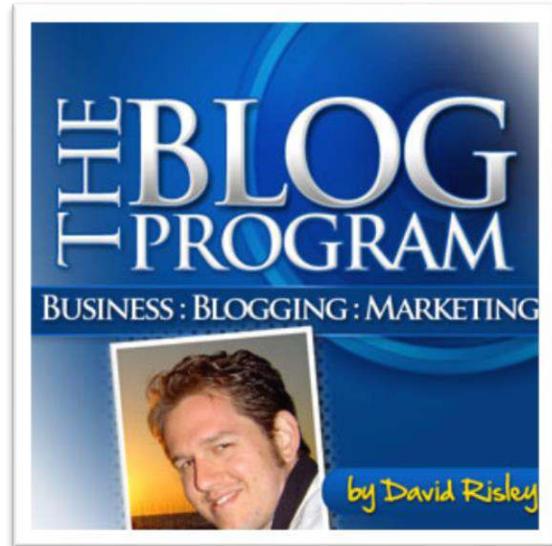
THE BLOG PROGRAM

Podcast Transcript

TBP Episode 21 – The A-to-Z Breakdown Of How I Make My Web Videos

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This is The Blog Program Episode 21!

In this episode I'm going to give you the entire A-Z approach to how I do my web videos.

Alright, let's go and get started here. But first, let's talk about what's new over at the Blog Marketing Academy.

First of all, the last Blog Post is called "[7 Ways To Use Your Autoresponder To Get More Traffic And More Money](#)". So basically, as you could tell from the headline, that post is all about how to use the autoresponder sequence in your email system. If you're using something like Aweber or the paid version of MailChimp or the other email marketing tools; then you have this ability to send a scheduled pre-written emails to every new subscriber. And it's an extremely powerful tool that I find it that a lot of people are not using. They are still relying on the one off emails that you have to manually send. So, at this blog post I give you 7 specific ways that you can actually use your autoresponder capability and yes... they will result in more traffic and more money. So definitely, go check that out on the Blog at [blogmarketingacademy.com](#).

And then there's the last entry in the Video Blog which is also relevant to what we are going to be talking about right now and that is "[Going Behind The Scenes On The Video Blog](#)" at Blog Marketing Academy. And in that, I actually spent a few minutes and show you some of the equipment that I actually use to make my Video Blog entries for the Blog marketing Academy. So, you go over there and check that out. You'll see some of the equipment; you'll kind of see how I have them set up in the office. And yes, it has everything to do with what we're going to be talking about on this episode of The Blog Program where I'm going to give you the full detailed breakdown of exactly how I make those videos.

So with that said, let's jump right in to our feature segment.

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First of all, I hope you have noticed by now, and you should be; if you actually have been going to Blog Marketing Academy, or you're in my list; is that I've been making a lot more videos. In fact, it's now part of my content schedule where I release a new video blog entry every Thursday. And I hope that you have been enjoying those videos. I certainly try to make every one of them valuable. But it all started with a resolution that I made for myself at the very beginning of the year which was to make more videos. It really came down to the idea of hitting the 3 major forms of content that I think everybody should be hitting. That is the written blog post, the podcast and video.

So now, my weekly content schedule hits all three. I have a blog post that comes out, I have the podcast which is what you're listening to right now and then I have the Video Blog entry. So, we are going to be talking about those videos.

The thing about those videos is I wanted to make them higher quality because I have had the thought in the past to make videos and you may remember, if you have been a subscriber of mine for a while now; that it was in the 2013 I believe, that I started making these car videos. And I started making these videos where I was using my iPhone and basically holding my iPhone up in the air and making these extremely informal videos. And I did as far as to pick up a few pieces of equipment to allow me to mount the phone inside my car and record videos while I was driving.

Now, the thing about those videos and the reason I ultimately stop making them is because I think it detracted from the overall brand and quality level that I wanted people to associate with what I'm doing.

You know, when I'm recording a car video, there's that inherent background noise thing going on, there's the shake of the camera which - I don't care what kind of mount you have... if it's mounted to a moving object which is a car, the camera is going to shake a little bit and it just looks a little odd. And then I had somebody made a very interesting point to me and that was... because I have to watch the road, obviously in order not to crash - that it seemed like I was treating my audience, my viewers as a second priority - which obviously, I was, because I have to drive the damn car. But at the same time, I don't want my viewers to feel like that. So, I can't make a good point and make a good video with lots of background noise, a shaking camera and me not looking at the person who's watching me. So it just didn't make a very good situation. So therefore, I stopped doing it.

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And I realized that if I'm going to start doing videos, I need to do them well. I need to actually make the production quality something that I don't mind people watching. And so that was one of the things that I set out to do. I really realized that it isn't just communication that matters but that quality of communication also matters. So, that's what we're going to talk about today; how I did that when it comes to videos.

So, the first thing that you obviously need in order to make a web video is you need something to talk about. And you need a topic. And how I personally handle that is; the first thing is that I constantly keep my ears to the ground so to speak, on what my audience is telling me. I read every single comment that shows up on the Blog Marketing Academy Blog. I usually reply to them as well. But, you know... I don't always reply coz I'm a busy guy but I always read every single one. I also keep track of what people are saying on the YouTube comments. I keep track of iTunes reviews on this very podcast; which by the way, yes... please go over there and post that. 😊

And here's the other thing that I do... I have the welcome email whenever somebody gets on my list. It sends the 7 word question. And I've actually done a video blog entry on this; but that 7 word question is, "What is your biggest challenge right now". And I send that out and I get a lot of replies. And these replies are usually fairly involved. People really tell me what their challenges are. That is the kind of stuff that I do, keeps my ear to the ground on what my audience really wants. And what they are struggling with and that leads to content ideas.

Now, the thing is, I don't just keep those content ideas on my head. I always, always keep a running idea file. I keep a file of every idea that I come up with for any type of content. And for me, personally, I keep those ideas inside of WorkFlowy. And that's workflowy.com.

By the way, a little on the side; anything that I mention on this episode is going to be found on the show notes over on the blog. So all the equipment we'll talk about, everything will be linked to so you don't need to worry about if you're jogging right now or driving trying to take a note. It will all be on the blog.

So, that being said, it's called workflowy.com, really, really powerful free outlining tool. I use it every single day. But one of my points in my overall Workflowy list is an idea file. And then I have the idea file all broken up into formats. So, I've got a section for written post, a section for video blog entries and a section for this very podcast. Whenever I have an idea for any one of those things, I put it on the idea file. So, I reference that idea file every single time that I'm going to sit down and record a podcast, record a video or whatever.

The other thing is that when I put entries on the idea file for my videos, I do keep it to topics that I believe I can discuss within 3 to 5 minutes because I think it is important with videos that you keep them fairly short. We do tend to have shorter attention spans these days, sadly enough. And we have to work with that. It is just what it is.

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When people are on the internet watching video, you have to be extremely entertaining if you are going to hold their interest for 3 to 5 minutes. Actually, it should probably be closer to 3. But I actually have a difficult time keeping it that short so I just try to keep it in that range of 3 to 5 minutes. If I don't think that I can cover it adequately in that topic, then it would be a topic that I would probably put on my idea file for either a written post or an episode of this podcast. But videos are 3 to 5 minutes.

The other thing is that I will make a point to mix it up somewhat. When I put the entry on the idea file, I will actually make note of whether that is going to be a talking head style video or I'm talking to the camera, whether it's going to be a screencast or I'm demonstrating something on the screen. And I will purposely have my idea file for videos mixing up some. I don't want every single video that I do to be me, speaking to a camera. Sometimes, I want to go and I want to do a screencast. Sometimes, like the one I just recorded about the behind the scenes for the video blog I actually switched to my iPhone as the camera on that particular video in order to show the room that I am sitting in.

And so that mixes it up some. And I think it is also important when people are watching your video is that they don't get stuck with the exact same view every single time. I know a lot of people will do these white background videos like they are trying to mimic Apple. It's totally good because they are actually nice looking videos. But that said, that that's all you ever do and if you're not by nature an extremely entertaining person, then don't do that all the time. You want to mix it up a little bit.

Okay, so that's how I handle topics.

Next, let's go into that part that everybody always loves, which is the equipment that I use. So, let's just go over this...

The first of all is the camera itself. I'm actually using the Canon T4i. This is a great DSLR camera. I think they are up to the T5 right now, I honestly don't know what the differences are. So if you've got a T4i you'd be good, T5i; definitely. T3i can do videos as well. I think the main difference between the T3 and the T4 is the fact that the T4 can do longer videos without stopping. The T4i is a little bit better suited or probably a lot better suited to doing video work than the cameras that came before that. If you have other styles of Canon, they are going to be fine, too. And if you are with Nikon, that's fine, too. I'm not a big knowledge base when it comes to all the differences between all these cameras so I cannot really speak to that. All I can say is I have the Canon T4i and it's a great camera.

Now, the camera is one thing, the lens is a whole other thing altogether. So you can't just buy the camera and think it's going to make awesome videos for you. The lens really matters. Now, the one that I'm using; it used to be provided as an option for a kit lens but I don't believe it is anymore. But it's Canon, it's a zoom lens that goes from 18mm to 135mm and it's the IS STM lens. It's such a variable zoom lens. It allows me to go very wide with the 18mm or to zoom in to 135mm so it gives me a lot of flexibility for the purposes of video. And this is a great lens for video that is why I bought it. It has that type of focus motor that can actually adjust focus while you are recording and you don't hear the motor. And that's very important. It also doesn't seem to hunt that much.

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Some of my earlier videos this year, you could see the camera trying to change the focus while I was in the middle recording. I get blurry for a minute and after that I come back. You could see that it is hunting around. This lens is a lot better at that. You could still scroll it off a little bit like you can throw your hand way out in front of you; it will sit there and try to focus on your hand. But as long as you're fairly static in how far away you are from the camera, this lens does a really good job of holding that focus.

The microphone that I use is a wireless lapel mike and it's a Sennheiser EW100 G3. Now, it's not a cheap wireless lapel mike I put off buying this thing for a little while because I spent probably about \$550 bucks in this mike. Well, you know, "I really don't want to spend \$550!" But I really decided that it was time for me to pick up that mike and it makes a real world of difference. Before that, I was using a much, much cheaper Audio Technica... I don't remember the exact model but I'll put it in the show notes. Anyway, it was a wired lapel mike with a steel clip and then it would have this 18 or 20 foot cord going across the floor and it will plug in to the camera. And that worked but it was problematic. Sometimes, for one, it will run out of battery and it had no indicator to tell you whether you'll run out of battery so you'll just sit there and recorded this whole video and you'll never know whether you fully have the audio or not. That was the biggest problem.

The other thing was it's mono which means it only recorded one channel, then record left and right. So you have to do a little editing thing to duplicate the channels. Not a big deal... and it just didn't sound as good! So, the Sennheiser is obviously a lot higher quality and it also gives me that flexibility of being able to walk around and not totally tied to everything.

Okay, so that's the camera, the lens, and the microphone.

Now, let's talk lighting. Lighting is extremely important to making good video. Now, I have a 3-piece lighting kit; the kind that have the umbrella looking thing on them. They're square, though. They're like the Softbox. That's what they are. And I have a 3-piece kit; it's called the FancierStudio 3000 Watt Softbox lighting kit. I think I spent about \$160 on these things. They're not the sturdiest things in the world; I would not want to like move around in different scenes with them. But that being said, being that I pretty much leave them up all the time, they're perfect. They just sit there, they do their job. And the other thing I really like about them is that inside each Softbox is, (I think) 5 different halogen bulbs. So, instead of having just one big one, it's got five smaller ones, each one with their own switch. So I don't have to run the thing in full power. I can actually turn on just a couple of bulbs and have a slightly dimmer scene versus it's all ON or all OFF. So that's one thing I definitely like about this box.

The fifth thing is the tripod. It doesn't really matter what kind of a tripod I'm using because they all hold the camera up. So, you just want to get something that's sturdy enough to hold up the camera that you're using. In my case; when you have a DSLR and you got the lapel mike receiver sitting on top of it and the fairly heavy lens sticking up the front of the camera, it's a little bit of a heavy camera. So, a real dinky tripod is not going to hold this thing up and keep it from falling. So you need to get a tripod that is going to be sturdy enough to hold up the camera that you want to use.

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The other thing is that you want a tripod that can get your camera high enough off of the floor so that it keeps it at about head level. What you don't want is for you to be looking down at your camera while you are recording because then it seems like you are lecturing your audience and looking down at them. It's not a good set up. Vice versa, you don't want to be looking up at your camera because then it's almost like you're small compared to your audience. So you want to be looking at them -- level. That's why you want to have a tripod that you can mount this camera at about your head level.

In terms of software, I use ScreenFlow because I do use the Mac and I think ScreenFlow is the absolute best option out there. And even though it's primarily known as a screen recorder, it makes a great video editor. So, that is what I use. I don't use iMovie, I don't care what version of iMovie it is, I just don't use it. I do all of my editing inside of ScreenFlow and it does perfectly fine. If you happen to be on Windows, you can use moviemaker if you're so inclined or you can check out Camtasia which is pretty much the ScreenFlow alternative for Windows.

And then there is the video intro that I use which like the video blog intro will tack a little commercial on the end; which is something that not a lot of people do. I actually put a little ad for my training on the end of my YouTube videos. So, the intro; I actually had somebody on Fiverr make it for me. Nice and simple. If you can afford \$5, you can have an intro like that made. And then for the commercial, I actually made that myself. I'm probably going to redo it, but basically all I did was make a quick slide presentation in Keynote and then I recorded myself doing a quick talk through on that thing, like really quick. You don't want to make these commercials long. And then when I took it into editing, I added the background music and stuff like that exported and now I have an mp4 file of a commercial that I can now drag and drop into any video I make. So that's pretty much how I do that.

Now let's talk about the process of how I make these videos...

First thing, I get the idea in mind. I go to WorkFlowy, I look at the next entry on my idea file and I mode over in my head and kind of decide what I want to say. Now, if it's something that I might not be able to remember everything, then I make a few little bullet points and put them in my field of view so that it will remind me while I'm speaking. I am not one who likes to script myself. I'm a pretty good person at reading a script and sounding pretty natural at it but I just don't like doing it. I would much rather talk off the cuff. So I'm the kind who - I will work with a few bullet points and then from there I will just adlib. And that's the way that I like to do my videos.

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So once that I have the idea in mind, I turn on my lights. I've got 3 lights. Now, here's how I turn them on. The one on the right side of me, I turn on to full power. So, all 5 bulbs inside the Softbox are turned on. The one to the left of me; I turn on to about 60% power. So, in this case, there are 5 bulbs, I turn on 3 of them. The one in the back; I have a third light which is on the left side and it's right next to the light that faces the left side of my face. But instead of shining on me, that third light shines on the wall and just to highlight the background a little bit being that I don't want to highlight that background like drastically, I turn that light on to 40% power. I only light 2 little bulbs in order to just slightly light the background behind me which happens to be a wall by the way; just a blue wall. So, that's what I do with the lights.

From there, I mike up. I put on the Sennheiser, usually inside my pocket. I'll string the microphone up my shirt and clip it on to my collar. The receiver of my mike sits on top of the camera and I just turn both sides on and I'm ready to go as far as the audio goes. And then because I have the Canon T4i, I have the flip-out screen on it so I flip that screen out and turn it over so that when I'm sitting in front of the camera I can see myself on that screen and see whether I'm on frame or not.

From there I will go over and stand in front of the camera and look at that screen and see if I'm in frame. I want to see if any of my lights were showing up in frame. If so, I will adjust the zoom because I don't want those lights to show up there and look a little weird. I basically just want me and the wall. And I want the wall to be lit properly to where it's there, it's kind of lit but I'm the one who stands out; not the wall. From there, I will record a quick test clip. So, I literally just hit the record button on the camera, go stand in front of the camera, and say a few stupid things and then I go turn it off again. And the only reason for that is again, to make sure the mike is working, that the camera is picking everything up, blah-blah. From there, once I knew everything is working I hit record, I go stand in front of the camera and then I begin recording my video.

Now the actual process of recording the video; it works like this... first I record the intro. So the intro is the first ten seconds or so of the video that is going to go before the actual video intro because you got the intro which has a logo and a little music and stuff like that. But before that, I will have about 10 seconds of me telling the viewer what to expect on this video. So you could look at that as the headline like on a blog post. It needs to be enticing. It needs to provide a promise of something that they are going to get by watching this video and make them want to watch it.

So that's what I do. I record that intro, and then I pause. I'll sit there for 5 to 10 seconds, it doesn't really matter how long I take. And yes, I leave the camera running the entire time because this, I can all clip out. Once I kind of have into mind what I'm going to do, I record the body of the video. And there it is, I just record the body of the video. Now if I mess up anytime or say something kind of stupid, it doesn't really matter. I just pause for 5 to 10 seconds, let the thing keep on recording because it can all be edited out later. And also, by the way, when you take that thing into ScreenFlow, you can look at the flat points in the audio and you'll know when you stopped talking; you can know where you need to clip.

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So from there, that's pretty much it. I go until the end and then when I'm done, I pause for 5 to 10 seconds to give myself a little bit of buffer and then I'll go back over to the camera and hit the record button again and turn it off. From there, I take the SD card out of the camera, throw it into the Mac, import the video over to the Mac and I'll drag the video clip into ScreenFlow. I will also drag the MP4 clips for my video intro which is the logo and stuff and the commercial that goes on the end. So I have everything inside ScreenFlow ready to be done.

Now, I'm not going to get into a ton of editing itself because it gets to the nitty-gritty on how to use ScreenFlow and this is not the right setting to do that. But one thing I will say is that, some people have looked at the way that I will adjust the scene a little bit while I'm recording the video where it will pan around, it will zoom in a little bit and then it will zoom back out... I do that only for visual variety because one camera angle of me talking for 3 to 5 minutes is kind of boring. So the one thing I can do is to try to have periodically thwarted the video; I will zoom a little bit and pan it off to one side. And it gives the appearance of multiple camera angles even though it really is just one take. But it gives a better appearance of multiple camera angles. At the end, I export it into 1218 x 720 - that way it is basically set for HD. There's no need to export these things into full 1018p. It doesn't matter when it goes to the internet. But I do go to 1218 x 720 and at the end of it; I have got an MP4 file.

So that is basically the basic process of how I create these videos. Next process is to upload them.

I simply upload them to YouTube. Now, every video I will create a custom video thumbnail. So, usually what I'll do is once I got the video made, I'll scroll through it just locally on my computer and I'll find some frame of the video that looks kind of interesting and I'll screen cap it, put it into an image and I'll take that image into Photoshop and just kind of just make a little video preview image. Usually it doesn't take me very long, and Bam! I just think that's a lot better way to go to use a custom video thumbnail than to go for the one that YouTube picks for you, automatically. You want to get something that's visually enticing and make somebody want to watch that video.

The other thing is, on the Video Blog itself on blogmarketingacademy.com, I would actually go to the most recent video blog entry and I will copy that post into a new draft. And then from there I'll simply replace the embed code and add a little teaser right underneath the video. All my Video Blog entries basically look the same in how to find the excerpts, how to find the SEO information, blah-blah... Now in terms of transcripts, every single video blog entry gets transcribed by my VA. And then what she will do; she will go and she'll paste that transcript into YouTube itself as the description of the video and then she will go over my blog and she will post the transcript underneath the video right there. That's basically for search purposes.

We actually hide the transcript behind this little thing where you had to hit a button and it expands the transcript below the video because otherwise it will take up a lot of room. The plug-in that I use for that is called "Collapse-o-Matic". It's a free plug-in, you can just go and grab it. Collapse-o-Matic. It will allow you to have a little link there and then they click that and the transcript will expand downward rather than it being there sitting on the screen all the time.

So, that's basically kind of how we do it.

A few last minute tips here to make things sort of kind of interesting for you... the first thing is you do not need a fancy camera. I don't want you to think that you have to go out and grab a Canon T4i if you don't have one in order to make these videos. You do work up to it. Like I said, I was using my iPhone at first. And my iPhone videos didn't look that good but that was because I was pan holding the camera up in the air. If you treat the iPhone camera or any smartphone camera like a real camera and you tripod mount it and you use proper lighting and a good microphone; sometimes it can get really hard to tell the difference. They're really actually pretty good cameras if you have all the auxiliary equipment working around that. So you can definitely use a smartphone.

The other thing, and I just bought one, I haven't gotten it yet; is a Logitech C920 webcam. This right now I think is the best webcam that Logitech happens to make. It works via USB, plug it right in to your computer. But the good thing is that it has a 6 foot cable on this camera that will allow you to position the webcam anywhere you want but still pipe it directly into your computer. So, it doesn't alleviate the step. It alleviates the importing step when you're using a remote camera. But at the same time, the quality of the Logitech C920 is supposed to be pretty good. I was actually at New Media Expo and I heard... Caleb Jennings or something like that; he's the guy that does the video work for Fizzle. He was recommending this webcam. I think Patt Flynn uses this webcam. So I was like, "I want to go and use it". Because I use the DSLR, I'm going to continue to use that. But sometimes I want to record a video in a different set up and all I have is the eyesight on my iMac so I decided to get a webcam that works for the same level of simplicity but where I can actually control the angle without moving my whole monitor so I went ahead and picked up the Logitech C920.

The other thing about videos that will help is to systematize it as much as you possibly can because you just simply won't make that many videos if it is hard. So the best thing you could do is spend that time to work a process that is going to be easy for you. Work out all the kinks. Make it so that you can just make these videos quickly. In my case, I set up all these stuff in the office and then leave it. I don't move my stuff around. And then it helps because it makes it a lot quicker when I want to make videos. When I have my various clips that I want to include in the video, I will keep them all in one folder, that way I don't have to go hunting around for them. So, little things like this to make it a lot, lot simpler to create your videos will definitely help.

Lastly, is the idea of just keeping it simple. Don't try to go on there and make Hollywood quality stuff. Keep it as simple as possible. This is the reason why, by the way, I use a wall. A simple wall as my background rather than trying to do all these unnecessary green screen effects or how these fancy cloth backgrounds. I know a lot of people they just pull their freaking hair out trying to make these plain white backgrounds so they can look like Apple. And those things are a lot harder to pull off than you think. You need that white cloth, you need to have no wrinkles in it whatsoever and you need damn near perfect lighting to pull that off.

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And it's really hard to do sometimes unless you go to a studio or something like that and it's just not worth the effort. It's not worth the effort. Nobody is going to watch your videos more because of that white background. I have had people watch my video blog entries with a simple blue wall behind me and they think that I'm using some fancy green screen thing and I'm not. It's literally just the blue wall and I light it in such a way where it doesn't show all the little freckles of the dry wall and stuff that's why I have that 40% lighting on the wall and not 100%. That way they don't see every little flaw of the wall and it just kind of looks like this blue hue. But I'm the one who stands out from it and that's the way I want it to be. So, how can you just simply use your wall? If you have a white wall, you could be able to pull off the whole white background effect which is simply that wall, without having to worry about cloth and stuff. Makes it a lot easier.

Hopefully, that gave you a real good idea of how I make these videos. This is definitely a little bit of a longer episode than normal because I got into a lot of specifics. But I want to really lay it out there for you; how I actually make those things. And if you have any questions at all that you're really wondering how something happened or you want to get my opinion on something, feel free to ask me. You can just run over to the show notes at blogmarketingacademy.com/episode21 and ask your question and I'll get right back to you. But definitely, ask me away, I'll try to cover as much as possible. I know that I can't cover everything and I'm also not the video blog expert. There are people out there who focus on video work like James Wedmore and people like that and those guys are the authority when it comes to video marketing. But I know enough to be dangerous and I wanted to show you how to do it with the approach that I have and that hopefully I've laid that out for you properly here.

Alright, with all that said and done, I want to thank you for listening to this episode of [The Blog Program](#). Hopefully, it was useful to you. As I said earlier, you can find the show notes at blogmarketingacademy.com/episode21. That is going to have a ton of links for you, linking to all the equipment that I've talked about, software tools, things like that. Because I know I mentioned a lot of different things in this episode. You'll find that at blogmarketingacademy.com/episode21.

Lastly, if you're finding these episodes valuable; I would highly appreciate it if you would run over to iTunes and post a star rating and/or a review of the show. It just basically helps me expose the show to more people and that's always a cool thing for me, but it's also going to be a cool thing for you because it will allow me to do some really cooler things in the future episodes of The Blog Program.

So, that's about it, thank you very much for listening and I will see you next week!