

COFFEE BREAK BLOGGING

Podcast Transcript

Episode 138: Securing Your Product: How To Keep People From Stealing It

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Welcome back to another installment of [Coffee Break Blogging](#), where this isn't just another podcast; it is a full course on building an online business based around blogging from scratch.

My name again, is David Risley and if you want to catch up with us from the beginning, go to coffeebreakblogging.com to view the full archives.

Okay, let us get in to our topic for today. What we are going to be talking about today is Securing Your Product... Namely, how to keep people from stealing it.

Now, here is the thing... I know that especially when you are first getting started and you put products out there for sale that you want to prevent people who have not bought your product from being able to gain access to it. Now, I will be upfront with you, that I believe that many people who are first starting out tend to worry about this problem a lot more than they probably need to.

I mean, the thing is... the nature of digital products is that it can be duplicated. There is not much that you can do about it at the end of the day. If it can appear in somebody's web browser and if somebody has the know-how, they can get it. They can download it; even if you try to keep them from downloading it, if they have the right knowledge and the right software, they can get it. Okay?

So the first thing that I want to do is discuss the question of: Should you even worry about this? Should you put a lot of effort into keeping people from stealing your stuff?

I am a big fan of putting in reasonable precautions and then moving on and basically, stop thinking about it. That is what I think you should do. I think you should put in reasonable precautions; do not spend a heck of a lot of time on it, put some product security in place; and we will talk about that, to keep people from just willy-nilly sharing this stuff around. Then once you have got that, move on with your life and stop worrying about it. You cannot plug all the holes, you cannot keep everybody from doing it.

The thing is, too, the percentage of people out there that are actually going to bother to do it is very, very low. It is not going to really have that big of an impact on your business, and in fact, I have heard stories out there; of people who actually manage to get sales from people who have downloaded their content for free. You know, just because somebody grabbed it that way does not mean that they are not going to become a customer of yours at some point down the road. But also realize that those people, most of the time, are probably never going to become a customer of yours anyway; so it is not as if they are costing you money, and secondly, it is an extremely small percentage of people that would actually bother to steal it. Okay?

But it goes back to that thing I said earlier... If it shows up in a web browser and they have got the knowledge and they have got the software, they can get it. If they fully intend to get it, there is not going to be a heck of a lot you can do to stop them. They will find a way.

Now, I want to talk a little bit here about the scarcity mindset. It is the idea that, especially when you are at the beginning and you have not made that many sales yet, it is really easy to get so focused on these very few people that might steal something from you that you forget that you should be spending your time on making more sales. That is really where your attention should go. It should go on making more sales and delivering to your existing customers.

You should not be putting that much attention on how to prevent somebody from taking it, because that is you concentrating on scarcity. It is on you, concentrating on a lack of something rather than what you can actually generate; which is in terms of sales and stuff like that. So, I do not want you to get focused on that. It is an absolute waste of time and it is a scarcity mindset. I want you to realize that the internet is a very big place, that most people are not up to screw you over and that you should be focusing on abundance rather than that scarcity of those few people who might bother to try to take it. Focus on making more money.

Now, all that said, I want to keep it in proper perspective and now I want to jump in to "How can you actually prevent people from stealing stuff."

Realize that nothing is 100% fool proof. No matter what you do, if people are dead set on getting it, they will. Even if they have got to buy their way into your program, grab it and then request for a refund or do a chargeback and move on. Again, there is a very small amount of people that would do this, but there are a few out there.

So how do we do reasonable precaution and prevent this from happening?

The first thing is to use membership site software. We have talked a lot about membership sites here in the past, on Coffee Break. So we are not going to cover that ground again; but membership site software is not all about recurring billing. A lot of people, when they hear about membership sites, they automatically think they are going to have some monthly recurring program. But it does not have to be that way. At the basic, all a membership software is, is a way to have controlled access to content to make them log in to view certain content.

So what you can do is use membership site software to deliver your product. And that could be by way of downloadable so you just make them log in to download it. It could be a bunch of videos... It really does not matter what it is. You make them log-in in order to get it. So that right there is going to cut a lot of people out from sharing it. And of course, most membership site software that are of any good caliber have protection mechanisms in there to do things like keep people from sharing their log-ins, it will disable the account if they see log ins from separate locations and all that type of thing. So the membership site software will often take care of this problem for you.

Now obviously once they are logged in, if that person is going to be one of those very few people who will bother to steal it, they could. There is not a lot you can do about that. Now you can make it a little bit more difficult; and one way to do that is to use "expiring links" for anything that you want them to be able to download. So instead of linking to the file directly, say on your server, you link to it using a special URL; a special web address that will expire after a certain amount of time. So what this does is it keeps them from being able to copy and paste that link from the membership and go out some place else and post it and say, "Hey, you can download it here!" but no, it won't work for them because the link will expire.

There are various ways of doing that, I am not going to get into the technicals; and quite frankly, there is a manual free way to do this with AmazonS3 that I am just not geeky enough right now to tell you how to do, plus it will probably confuse you as much as it does me. But there are plug-ins and things like that out there that can make your life a lot easier.

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If you are using a membership site software that supports expiring links, then it is all going to be built right in for you. [S2 Member](#) is one of the systems that I believe that can actually do that and you can just go search for S2 Member and learn more about that. I believe they have expiring link capability built right in.

There is another system that I am aware of that is called [S3 Media Maestro](#). And this is from the guys at Fly Plug-ins at flyplugins.com; the exact same people who made WP Courseware which I talked about before and I happen to use it myself at the [Blog Marketing Academy](#). So, S3 Media Maestro allows you to protect documents, videos, images; things like that using expiring links and it will be basically tied to the person's log in and you can say, for example: Allow this link to work for 24 hours and then it is done. So, if they go out there and copy and paste that link out into the wild, outside your site, it is not going to last very long. So that is S3 Media Maestro.

And if you go out on Google and search for "expiring links amazonS3" or "protected download link" or something like that, you will find other options out there as well.

Now, let us talk a little bit about videos... If you are going to have videos as part of your product, how do you secure the videos? Well, again... Where there is a will, there is a way. If a person wants to grab a video, they can. Even if you do not give them a link to download it, if they have got the right software, they can just play it back on their screen and they can record it or whatever... They can get it. So at the end of the day, there is not a lot you can do to stop it. You can just make it a little bit more difficult.

Personally, I am a fan of using systems like [Wistia](#) or Vimeo Pro. Vimeo is at vimeo.com and these guys, they do free video hosting just like YouTube but they have a Pro option which I think I pay around \$200/year for it so it is not that expensive. And I can upload all my training videos to [Vimeo Pro](#) and I have lots of really cool capabilities, and one of them is the option of making it available or not, for download. So that is kind of one way I go to protect my videos.

One other thing is just to ask yourself that question: Do you want to enable downloads on your videos? It can be useful for your paid customers to be able to download videos for offline viewing; that way they can download them to their iPad or iPhone or something and watch them there, they do not have to log in to your site for them just to watch it. So you have to just weigh this out to yourself... Convenience for your customers vs. making it more difficult for them not to distribute. If you are really going to be worried about it, whatever; then you can just not allow them to download the video and they are going to have to be logged in to your site in order to use it; it's totally up to you.

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Now one last thing that I want to mention is that you can use an all-in-one service to sell things. So for example, if you just got a one off eBook that you want to sell, you can use a third party service to not only sell it and process the order but also deliver that product to your customer in a secure way; and there is service is like [GumRoad](#) that can do that. I believe [e-Junkie](#) can do this as well. You pay a little bit more but it is worth it if you do not have a lot of products and you just kind of want to offload all these responsibility to somebody else, these services will do it for you and it will take care of the product security as well.

The last thing I want to mention here... You can have parts of your products that simply are not duplicable. This is a really easy thing that you can do. You can do live calls, office hours calls, webinars; things that as much as somebody might want to download it and redistribute it they simply can't, simply by the nature of it.

So that is a great way to increase the value of your product, make your product more attractive, but also to have parts of the product that even certain segments of it are out there in the wild and being redistributed by somebody, they are not going to have everything because some of it is simply not downloadable because it is live, or they are going to get on the phone with you, or what have you. So that is another way that you can go.

At the end of the day, these are the various ways that you can use to prevent people from stealing your content, but again, my recommendation is to take reasonable precaution on this, do not spend a heck of a lot of time at it, and then move on and concentrate on making more sales and delivering to your real customers because that is how you are going to grow your business, not by sitting around worrying about those few people who are going to try to steal it. And you know, quite frankly, it probably won't even happen. But if it does, consider the badge of honor.

I've had some of my stuff redistributed before, and somebody will point it out to me and I'm like, "Okay" ... Well I guess it is just part of being in the business. I can't wear that as a badge of honor; these people were paying attention to me and all and you know, whatever. My sales are fine, it is not affecting the growth of my business at all, so I just move on with my life. And that is probably the way you need to be thinking about it as well.

Hopefully this episode was helpful to you. If you liked it I would highly appreciate a quick review to let the world know what you think of [Coffee Break Blogging](#). So if you can drop that at iTunes for me at blogmarketingacademy.com/itunes, I would really, really appreciate it and I would look forward to seeing your review over there.

Thank you so much for listening, I'll see you next time!