



Dave Taylor: So hi, thanks everyone for coming and first thing I want to do, I want to ask everyone to stand up. Come on, stand up, stand up, everyone stand up. I'll wait until everyone stands up. Everyone stand up. Ok, now, if you have updated your website in the last, I'm sorry, if you have not updated your website in the last 30 days, sit down. Ok. If you have not updated your website, and when I say update, well actually, we'll get to that. If you have not updated your website in the last week, sit down. Ok, if you have not updated your website in the last 48 hours, sit down. Ok. Now look around.

What's wrong with the web today? Everything's old. All right, the rest of you actually can, actually no, the rest of you stay standing. So the people that are still standing theoretically have updated their site in the last 48 hours. Now those of you who have updated it with some actual content, as opposed to a database generating new prices or new quotes or something, stay standing, and everyone else sit down. So only the people standing at this point are people who are walking in the room, and they already know that they'll get in trouble for actually having cell phones turned on, and people who have actually added new content to their site in the last two days. Ok. Now, everyone can sit down, thank you very much.

Let me tell you before we start, that what search engines want is new content added to your site every day. Ok. There are other people where that are real experts on search engine optimization and search engine marketing. We'll talk about that, but let me tell you that what all those people are doing, uh-oh, that's an easy 20 bucks, sorry. Ok, someone accost that guy on the way out. There we go, we'll get his PayPal account, and we'll hack it.

But what the search engines want is they want to give you the best possible results for any given search. And if you go talk to search engine programmers, you'll find that their definition of the best possible results is good quality fresh unique content. That is going to be the cornerstone of what we'll talk about today. So let me go ahead and jump into my first slide.

The first thing I want to say, and I'm going to echo at least one other person here, is that blogging is a tool and that what you really need to be a successful business is business basics. I'm always amazed when I come to the affiliate summit and talk to people, and they think that they can just pick up the ten newest offers off Commission Junction, and somehow add them into their website, and get five new URLs and throw up these instant websites, and that is going to be successful for them. There are, I admit, a very, very small number of people that have figured that out, and they do the whole arbitrage with AdWords, feeding it to the EBay affiliate program and stuff, but for every person that's figured that out, I've met at least 50 people that have spent a lot of money and have gotten negative results.



So, the first thing I want to encourage everyone to do is to think about this as a business. How do you differentiate from other people? One of the real fundamental challenges with the affiliate space is if everyone in this room signs up as an affiliate for say, American Express, we're all selling the same product, potentially to the same audience at the same price, and we can't change the offer. Which makes it really, really hard to be successful.

So one of the things I would encourage for people to actually offer affiliate programs, for companies that actually offer affiliate programs, is to figure out how you can help your affiliate program be successful, by perhaps giving them the ability to package things. If you sign up for this card, you also get this offer, and that's only through me.

All right, now some affiliates, again, can figure out ways to do unique offers and such, but generally, there's just a built in dilemma here, in the whole affiliate space, and it's something that a number of us have been chewing on my weblog -- we'll see that in passing. But I just wanted to start out by really pointing out that a good business is one where you'll have a sense of who it is, and who runs it, and who's behind it. So one of the big buzzwords in the whole blogging space is the establishing credibility and creating a voice.

How many of you know who, for example, Bill Gates is? Or Steve Jobs? Or Larry Ellison, ok? Now, the reality is that these guys aren't actually hands on micromanaging these hug companies, contrary to what the press might suggest. But what these companies have done, and what these executives have done is they realize that they need to have a face. There needs to be someone associated with the company, or it's this faceless behemoth, you know. Who is Ford? Who's General Motors? Who's American Express? I don't know. I don't know the names of anyone at that company. And so what happens is that it becomes a company that I don't feel that I can have a relationship with, because you don't have relationships with organizations, you have relationships with people.

And so one of the things that blogging can really get you, and I don't care if you're a merchant or an affiliate, or even just dabbling in the affiliate space and have a different kind of business entirely, is it can give you a face and a voice into your marketplace. And that's very, very powerful. So let's travel down our little rabbit hole and see where we go. So, first thing I want to talk about, and for those of you who haven't yet, and this is where you're going to have to start following me, for those of you haven't yet put your business card, there's a bowl just outside, we'll bring it in a little bit, and what I'm giving away is a copy of my latest book, which is *The Idiot's Guide to Growing Your Business With Google*, forward by Guy Kawasaki; Guy likes me to say that. And what this book is basically about is findability. And findability is the concept of how easily can people find you when they're looking for your service or product.



So here's a great example of this, and I don't know if the person is present here. But in my bag, and I'm sure in your bag, was this brochure for the Bose affiliate program, is the person who represents this company here? No. So, here's the classic thing that happens with these sort of things, is that they have a really interesting offer, they have really good terms, and I have no way of finding out about it. If they have to put that in my bag, that's a problem. Because what I want to have happens is I want to be able to go to MSN, or Yahoo, or AOL, or Google, or whatever search engine I like, and search for affiliate programs for noise reducing headphones, and find it. Does that make sense?

Even the whole model of Commission Junction, and those, is still fundamentally flawed, because I don't, how do I know that Commission Junction exists in the first place? All right? How do you get your message out to the larger possible community that you work with? And how many do you, for example, have email newsletters that you use to keep your affiliates up to date? Ok? How do people that aren't yet affiliates know what's in that newsletter? It's not findable.

That information that just absolutely jewels of knowledge, that information that could help people decide to be affiliates, you're hiding by the very nature of how you're deciding to communicate that out. And again, with something like this, and we'll look at this again, but I look at the Bose program, and I think, you know, these guys constantly have new news, they have new products, they have sales milestones that they make, they have new offers, why don't they just have a blog about all this? And then I might stumble across it, read through some stuff, and say, "Ooh, I want to sign up as an affiliate."

Again, if you're doing this by email or, worse, if you're requiring affiliates to log into your site, so they can get the latest news on your program, then no one else will ever find it, and you're violating this basic concept of findability. And I will put it to you that, I kind of hate to use this phrase, that this really represents a paradigm shift. And what's really changed is that people start traveling for information by going to a search engine. And that's very profound, because among other things, it means that if you can't be found, you're already dead.

How many of you know the difference between natural search and paid search? Or paid placement? Ok, good. Well, how many of you are actually findable through natural search? The rest of you have a very serious problem. Because that means that the day you decide, "Oh we're not going to advertise any more," you're gone. Or the day that someone else comes along that bids three cents more for that placement, all of a sudden you lose 30% of your potential customers.

If you can get into the world of natural placement, or organic results, which I like, coming from Boulder, Colorado, then you really are in such a stronger position, because



then what happens is that people who search for your product or service, and I don't care whether you're a marketing and affiliate program, or you're marketing products as an affiliate, either way, if I'm searching for your product or service, and I can't find you, you really have a problem. And for most small businesses, I think it's absolutely the case that they're already dead, and they just haven't noticed yet.

And so what does this look like? It looks like, oh, I'd better keep advertising in the Yellow Pages. Or I'd better make sure that I have fliers that I put under windshield wipers. Or I better make sure that I somehow incent my existing customers to tell their friends by giving them some sort of a commission. Those are all good strategies, but more and more, you look at the statistics, more and more people are starting online, doing their research, even for offline purchases. Even for things like mountain bikes, even for things with physical products that people go to a store and buy, over 50 percent of people now start out doing research online.

A great example of that is with automobiles. Car research sites are huge. Doesn't mean people are going to buy the car online, although EBay Motors suggests otherwise, but for a whole lot of stuff, people want to find it online, and do their homework, and be at least a little marginally educated, and you can slide into that, and then start offering your products and services, and now you have some great credibility.

So here's another one, how many people have read the book *The Tipping Point*? Ok, the rest of you really need to go and buy this book and read it. It's very, very interesting. Malcolm Gladwell. His basic premise in *The Tipping Point* is that we seem to think that we all have autonomy, and act based on what we want, but that's not true. What really happens is that we are influenced by a small number of people who are thought and opinion leaders, and they basically tell us what to do.

Now, if you don't think that's the case, then look around and see people who are wearing logos. Or go over to the Disney market place and look at these poor families that are totally exhausted. I was out there at 10:30 at night last night, looking in the store, and these people are walking along with their kids, and their kids, they could be extras in a baby zombie movie. Its 10:30 at night, and these kids have been in the Magic Kingdom all day, they've been eating sugar all day, I have three kids, I know what this is like, and the kids are like, "Can I have this, mommy?" You know, you just need the blue face paint and stuff.

But it's the whole thing is like, you know, they're all really, really focused on buying this stuff because someone, somewhere, has suggested to them that that's cool. You know, billions of dollars play on this game. And I will go further than what Gladwell does, because I will say that I see it as a pyramid, so that there's sort of the huge, unwashed



masses, if you will -- I guess I can get away with that. I didn't say that, we'll edit it out at the mix. So there's the masses, and then there are the influencers, and then they themselves are influenced by other people. And so when you actually look at this, it's really a pyramid shape.

And so, for example, with technology, Walter Mossberg is the most influential technology critic and analyst in the world. He writes for the Wall Street Journal, and if he mentions a company, or if he mentions a product, then you can watch over the next month or two, is that works its way down the food chain, and one mention from him can make a huge difference in that company's success, in the same way that people like Rush Limbaugh have huge credibility for his audience, and Doctor Laura has huge credibility with her audience, you might not be part of these audiences, probably you aren't, but none the less, they have millions of people, and that's why, when they actually have ads, their ads are them giving a testimonial about something; that's why that's powerful. Because of this whole concept.

And yet, how many of you feel that you have a better month than the previous if you got more traffic to your website? Isn't there a little dilemma here? Because, to my way of thinking, if I'm trying to sell a product or service, I don't want to have lots of traffic, I want to get the right traffic. I want to get to those influencers. I don't necessarily want to get to the entire unwashed mass. And the reason that is important is one of the first objections people have when we talk about blogging, when I consult with them, is that, "Oh, but most of our audiences don't read blogs." But OK, it doesn't really matter.

Because if they're NASCAR fans, they probably read this magazine. And they guy who writes for this magazine reads all the blogs, because that's where he comes up with his ideas. And so then they might not directly read that blog, but indirectly they'll get the information that you convey. So, there's one thing to think about.

And here's another one: is your home page obsolete? This is something if there are any web developers in the audience, I know right now that you're gritting your teeth, and you've got white knuckles, and you're like, "Oh, we'll talk later." But here's the problem. The problem is that web developers think of this like this nice tree structure. You've seen these presentations that they make before they give you a bill for \$150,000. And their whole logic is that someone starts on your home page, and then they navigate around to the place that they want.

But that's not longer relevant, because more people come to your site by doing a search, and search engines no longer index websites, they index web pages. Which means that just about every website that I have ever looked at the statistics for, there are specific pages in that site that get a lot more traffic than that home page does.



So when you go back to your company, or when you bring up your laptop right now, and you look at your web site, answer the question, "Does every page on your site feed back to the right places? Does it convey the right message? Does it give people the right options so that, however they end up on your site, they can navigate around?" You'd be surprised at how many sites, for example, get to a press release, and there's no link at all on there. It's just an endpoint. It's like there's no navigation, there's nothing, it's just a press release. And they'll say, "Ok, I suppose you could have come from the home page, contact us, press release, but I start out here, so I don't know how to get anywhere else, so I leave."

So every page, not just your home page, but every page is part of your online marketing. So this changes your marketing and your sales. Now I'm going to try to speed up a little bit, because I really want to talk about and show you how blogging works. But I just want to throw these big ideas out here, because what I think we're talking about isn't, "So we're going to have someone complaining about the movies that they saw," but we're talking about a fundamentally different way to think about how you market and sell your product or service.

And, needless to say, don't forget about the offline world when you're working online. That's another one of these things where it's like, "Hmm, how many companies do not have URLs on their products?" First up: How many people have business cards? Second: How many people have business cards that are putted in the bowl at the back so that they can get a free copy of my book?

Everything you have physical and every reference you have, everything needs to be pointing back to you are online and every page on your online site needs to be promoting your product, your service, your company. It is all a big closed loop. And once you start forgetting that, then you have a real problem.

Here another issue: is that when you are looking for new employees, some companies are really getting this and what they do is they post on their blog they're wanted jobs. "We are looking for someone to come and run our affiliate program." You can do this in stealth-mode and maybe you will get a very small pool of people from the insiders. But there might be someone that really wants to jump into this space that has incredibly great experience that would never be part of that mailing list you use and might never been known by that given headhunter. Or you go out and put it in the public and now it is like: "You know - I think I will apply for that job!"

And it flips around the other way, too, as if you are looking for a job, you need to be more visible. I may talk about the importance of findability: How important is it for you



to be findable, if someone at some companies searching for someone with your credentials and expertise?

This is one example as I have a colleague who lives in Denver. He still lives in Denver and he actually spent a lot of time on a site called "LinkedIn" making himself a very findable for certain VOIP technical issues and Cisco found his profile called him and he get 125,000 dollars a year to work for Cisco out of his house in Denver. It is because Cisco found him because he put the afford in to make sure that people looking for his sort of skill set would find him, not someone else.

So in a lot of ways we are talking about really rethinking your business. You are thinking I came to hear about blogging and now I hear that I have to reinvent my whole business? [whistles] But I see companies, that recognize the changes happening but are afraid to make the change. There is one thing we are seeing about the second wave of this ".com" bubble, which I think is where we are now, is that there are a lot of companies out there, taking a lot of risk. If you are really risk-averse you have a real problem, because they are going to end up pulling ahead of you. It does not take very much for a lot of vendors or a lot of affiliates to say: "I could go with your program and it is easier and I get 4% more payout? OK, done!"

Finally I will again reiterate that search-engines are not looking for ads. Search engines not looking for pages with lots of links on them and they are not looking for cute flash animations. How many people do have flash on their website? Don't answer, it'll embarrass you. What they are looking for is content. For better or worse what the search-engines are still in the rut of is: Who publishes the best newspaper? Who has the best text? Who has the best content? So when you go back and look at your site, how much actual information do you have? This is embodied very much the whole concept of give away a little bit to gain a lot.

I see so many companies, that you have no idea of what they are selling because it is all of this coy five things that you will get, little bullet points and little testimonials and it is like: "OK fine, but let me read the introduction before I make a purchase decision. Let me see, what you are offering. Let me see a video, of it in action."

How many of you are following that idea? How many of you are producing this with frequency? So that is the word "fresh" here. That is really why we end up getting into blogging, finally. So it took us 20 minutes actually to get to the topic of the talk. So now, we are getting into blogging.

Let me just say right up front, that there are a lot of blog Nazis. How many of you



actually blog? OK, you know what I am talking about. "It is not a blog if you don't allow comments. It is not a blog if you do not have a time stamp. You cannot call it a blog, if you are not using WordPress." How many of you have had someone tell you that something you are doing makes it not a blog? I get this all the time from people. I have blogs that do not tell you when I made the postings. Oh my god! That is not OK.

But what all these people seem to neglect to realize is that it is just a tool. It is like anything else. It is like Dreamweaver. It is just a tool. You can use it for good or evil. It is like a gun. Guns do not kill people, Dreamweaver does! No, that is not right.

[audience laughing]

Hopefully no one from Macromedia is here.

The point I am making is it has a lot of really great characteristics as a web site management tool, but it is really up to you and your developer, I suppose, to make sure that it meets your needs.

For some companies, for example, you might not want to allow comments. What I mean by comments is someone comes to your blog they read your article and they add their two cents. Often that is really great and it is very engaging there is a lot of reasons -- and we'll talk about that and the second is a lot of reasons why that is a good idea. But you do not have to do it. There is no one sitting on the periphery saying: "I am sorry, we will have to take away your use of the word blog, because you do not allow comments."

Although ironically there are people that wish they could do that. I go to blogging conferences and I just sit in the back of the room and shake my head and just say: You guys are just... We are so far apart, because they are "Oh, well, you know, we have been looking and we think there should be a standard for how blogs should even lay out. They should all have the little calendar on the left side and they should all have this and all have that." You know, you guys do that and meanwhile I'm going to run a business. And good luck to everybody, I am thrilled that it's all evolving so quickly.

But there is one take away for you that have here is that blogging is just a tool and you can build what you want with it. And as a tool it has lots of really nice characteristics. So here are some things I really like about blogs, is that it is much cheaper to build a blog than a website. And this is particularly important if you keep launching new websites, new product lines or maybe you are an affiliate coordinator and so each time you get a new vendor you give them a new area or maybe there is another way you can do that. If it



is cheaper to build that means it is faster to turn around.

I will quote my esteemed colleague Mark Widower, who is sitting right here in the front, who told me last night, when we were talking, that -- what is it? -- that you can quote me, that the grip.... Pretty good is better than perfect. Thank you, I want to get that right. That is real important, because one of the things that happens when you start thinking about a website and you have a website developer and you have a usability team and you have legal and you have all these people that have to proof this big sophisticated thing is that nothing ever happens.

I have watched companies spend years trying to get websites out the door. And you know what happens in the meantime? Their competitor gets something out the door in three weeks that does not look great but they were refine it successively.

And so one of the huge things that happens is, now that we are all in the online world is that everything is liquid. How many of you still think of your website as this sort of digital version of a print brochure? And you have to get a perfect before you launch it, because once it is in print we got it for a year, right? A lot of web developers encourage this. "Well, we will work on your site and then we will come back in a year and give it a facelift." OK, but what if I wanted just work on it the whole year? Oh, well, that is a different story. But with the blog you really can! They are hugely search engine friendly.

I can show you time and again I kid you not, I get email from people complaining that whatever they look for, they find me.

[audience laughing]

I rarely complain about that personally, but the fact is that again, the whole world of search engine optimization in a lot of ways, I think is, one step behind the search engine. It is this game of leap frog. The search engines tweak their algorithm Google does a Google dance. For those, who did not know that terminology. I am always thinking like all this really geeky smart guys, from Stanford singing: "It's the Google dance." See it on video, which is terrible. I know that is going to be on youtube tomorrow.

And so Google makes some tweaks to its algorithm and by the way they use at least 200 variables to decide what page will be number one on a given search and I am just talking organic, I do not care about paid. I am not interested about paid. I do not do any paid at all. Does not mean it is not a good way to do things but I am much more interested in how do you get that natural organic.



So they do a change and then you hear all the people. I was talking to someone from Commission Junction they will say that every time Google does a dance they can see this tier of affiliate's just drops. Because they are just desperate to try to figure out what Google is doing and what Yahoo is doing and what MSN is doing so that they can always be on the top. So what happens is that they make this tweaks to the algorithm and then all the SEO people that are really smart in the background stealthily start working on different tricks. And some of them get really good results and then they have a couple of month where they have really great traction and then either:

A) They decide they want to capitalize on it by writing e-books or telecourses about it, so everyone does it or:

B) One of the sites just catches on and says: "Oh! That's what they're doing!" - click - and then everything recalculates and then they are knocked down to their regular state.

So the whole SEO world is always one step behind trying to guess and catch up with what the search engines are doing. Is anyone fundamentally disagreed with that statement? OK, clue that we have no aggressive SEO people in the room. That's good.

Instead I will suggest to you, that by blogging what you can do so you could be ahead of the curve -- and this is what I found -- is that if you can just try to say where is the search engine trying to get to as opposed to what are they doing to tweak their algorithms, so I can squeeze my way in again, then you suddenly change -- the whole thing changes. I am not saying you should not be doing SEO, because I think you do need to be doing at least best practices.

But if you just can do it once, and then focus on building content, you really are doing what Google, Yahoo and MSN wants, because you are producing fresh unique content on the web and that is what they are trying to find in the zillions of pages that they have to go through for every given search.

I will tell you that I and the bloggers I work with and the companies I work with that blog, they find takes a couple of month usually to start to get out of this sandbox and to start getting some good visibility and some links from the rest of your community. But if you really plug away and produce good quality content they start to find that they get better and better search engine results and they are not paying anything to anybody and they are not doing any SEO anymore. It is all just because they are doing what the search engines are trying to get to. So every time Google does a Google dance you actually do better not worse. That sounds nice, I am sure the affiliates in here are saying: "Man, I kill for that!" But no one has to kill anyone. Maybe that guy, who had a cell phone. Kidding,



kidding, kidding.

They are easy to manage in their fun. So here another issue is that, how many times do you actually enjoy working on your website? I had great time with my blogs. I actually have three active blogs one of which my wife and I write on parenting. And man, that's really fun, because I can just pontificate. Is this part of my business? No, it is not; that's fine. That is why I have for this a separate site. It is fun! It makes it really easy and I can do a website since '95. I did some of the earliest websites back when I get email, the person who had written the Web server so we could figure out, why things did not work.

That is how far back with this goes.

When you have a traditional website using traditional tools you sort of get it good enough when you stop because it is a hassle. And adding a new page means you need to go and you need to add links on all the other pages you need to update your sitemap and you need to make sure that everything all on the links are spelled correctly and so you do not.

But with the blog all of that tedium is done automatically.

[cell phone rings] That's two: it's 40 bucks. We're working our way up.

Maybe even more important is that you actually get to establish a dialogue with your customers. This is hugely important. I went out to dinner last night on the kind graces of Yahoo, so they paid the fly some people out here. They paid for private room over the Fulton crab house and they sat there and wined and dined us. Why? Because they wanted to hear what we have to say. Now if you want to do that for - I do not know - the top 150000 of your costumers that would be a pretty expensive proposition.

But if instead of having focus groups, that - by the way - tend not actually give you good results anyway (there is some really interesting science behind that). If you just simply said: "We are going to have an area of our website where we want you to respond and we are going to tap into a cultural phenomenon if you will that basically is a two way dialogue." Than that becomes something that is a very, very interesting proposition. Even if you have, you wanted to stick with your regular website, you love your web developers, everything else set up said you are just like: "Yeah, what ever! That is fine!"

But now how do you get your costumers to talk to you?

So many -- this is fascinating. I am walking around the hallway here and I am hearing affiliates talking to affiliate managers saying: "You mean I can call you? Really? Because I always assumed that I can't talk to you, because I just get in trouble," And the affiliate



manager is just like down on his knees: "Please call me! Please, I don't know how to make you successful, unless you communicate with me. And if you are not successful, guess what, we are not successful either," And that is a huge issue.

So how can you encourage that sort of dialogue? You know, one of the great ways to do that is with a blog. I tell you, that establishing a dialogue means allowing them to add comments. Now there are not always going to be positive comments. That is something I am going to talk about again in a second. But you have a decision you have to make, which is: Do you want to leave negative criticism out there for the rest of the public to see?

So we come back to that. One of the things I really love (and I will show you in minute how I do this), is that you can schedule things to be published in the future. So I will bet that most of the people here blogging, do not even know their tools can do this. So, I took my wife and family to Hawaii, for most of April. By the time we got on the plane to go to Hawaii, my blog had article schedule to posted every single day we were there. So what does that mean? That means that I can teach the search engines to visit me every day, another benefit. So just as a quick aside, I use Google as my example, I think the other search engines all fundamentally work the same. Google visits your site every 90 days. If your site hasn't changed in that 90 days, then it will visit you in another 90 days.

Why is that a problem? Because the next day you announce a new product, and now you have 89 days of no sales, because the search engines don't know that your product exists, because they're not going to visit for a long time. And people looking for that product or service on the search engines can't find you. So you have lost sales, and you can't speed that up except if you change your site.

And so the way they do it is if they come back in 90 days and it's changed, now you're on a 45-day cycle. They come back in 45 days and it's changed, now you're on a 22-day cycle. And on and on, you can slice it down to where the search engines visit and re-index you every single day. And if you don't think that's valuable, it's because you're not actually announcing anything on your site.

So now let's say you're an affiliate, and you just find out about this great new promotion, and you've taught the search engines to come to your site every day. And so you blog about this new credit card offer from Chase that's really cool and it turns out that it comes with a free Mickey plush - whatever, we're at Disney, so... and so do all the other affiliates, they go and dutifully add it to their little index on their web page. Well, their sites don't get indexed more than every two or three weeks, but yours gets indexed every day, so the next day, someone is Googling, or using Yahoo to look for a cool Chase offer for Disney, and you're right there. So you can have a tangible, positive result by having



taught the search engines to visit you more frequently. And by scheduling publications in the future you can do that without having to actually write every single day.

You know, my best practice for clients I work with is to post two or three times every week. Every single week. You're going on holiday, you schedule things in advance.

And finally, the thing I really like about comments is other people refresh my pages and produce content. I can show you pages that I have that go on and on and on with hundreds of comments. I think the one that got the most comments was on my parenting blog I wrote a piece about how I just don't get why guys cheat. And this has become, really, I kid you not, I think I could just turn it into a book at this point. It's a fascinating discussion because every possible constituent is represented in this. So there are the guys that cheat, there are the guys that hate the guys that cheat, there are the women that they cheat with, there are the women that have been cheated upon, and they're all going back and forth and talking about their opinion and their perspective. And you know what?

When you read books on this stuff you don't get all those viewpoints.

And so here you're reading about the guy whose wife has terminal illness, and they haven't been able to be intimate for four years, and then right after it you're reading about this woman whose life was destroyed by her husband cheating on her and then leaving, and so it's very compelling and independent of that subject matter the fact is that every day I get 10, 20, 30 people adding comments to my site, freshening those pages that I'm probably never going to touch again.

So, one of the big buzzwords in the marketing world is user-generated content; that's what this is. Other people are doing the heavy lifting. So now let's say you're an affiliate manager and you announce a new affiliate product, and people come along and they start adding comments about how it's working for them, what they wish was different about the offer, how they find the link system really complex, how they're concerned that they've read about link hijacking, and this seems like exactly the kind of link that could be affected.

All of this is helping your page be more relevant than your competitors' pages. And that's a plus. And if you then take the next step, which you should, and answer their concerns, now you're really proactive, and you're the hero. You're the one who's really out there working for these people. Not the faceless corporation. How many people have sent email to a corporation and never gotten a response at all? OK, I'm not sure what the rest of you do with your time, but boy I sure find this all the time. I'll just send a query to support@microsoft or something. I don't understand why does this product do this?



Nothing, never. And then they pop up a page, "We'll respond within 24 hours." Yeah, what? 24 Venusians hours? Can we quantify what planet you're talking about?

But having said that, I've got to say there are some pitfalls. This is the "truth in advertising" slide. It's that bloggers are a very cranky, whiny lot. And I know someone is going to quote me on that, Lee you can go ahead and blog that. But the fact is that it never fails to amaze me how much bloggers are just critical. And critical of the most inane things. So Boeing launched a blog. Here's this huge company, I would consider one of the 10 most important companies in the United States in terms of our economy and everything. So they launch a blog for their airplane division, and they use their own tool.

And so what's the first thing that happens is that all the bloggers say, "It's not a blog, you're not using the right tool." They don't say, "Cool! Boeing's embracing this!" They say, "You're not using the right tool."

So over and over again the same thing happens. Dell just launched a blog in the last couple of days and already I'm reading in the blog world, people are saying, "Oh, well so Dell's trying to do it right, but clearly they don't because they're so stupid." Can you give them a break? Maybe for a really big company this isn't the easiest thing to do, is to be a little transparent and open things up a little bit. But bloggers are very cranky and critical and you need to accept that going in, that whatever you do someone will tell you you're doing it wrong. And more likely than not, someone will tell you you're doing it horribly wrong. And they'll do it on their blog and point to you, so thank you for the link. So you just keep moving. It's the new version of "make sure you spell my name right, say anything you want, but spell my name right." Now it's, "Say anything you want, but make sure the link works."

[laughter]

There are expectations of update frequency. This is why on one of my blogs I don't put timestamps and what I mean by a timestamp is, "This article was written this date, this time." I don't do that on one of mine, because I know I only get to it once or twice a month. By doing that, if someone sees that the most recent posting was three months ago, what's the message? Oh it's not really a blog, you're not really paying attention, you have other stuff to do. But if there was no date, they wouldn't really know how frequently you updated things. They come back a month later, and hey, there's new stuff -- cool.

So, again, there are bloggers who will say that that's not good. And say too much, here's another one: is that if you have people in your company that you empower to blog, you probably want to give them some basic guidelines. This is the same as being at the bar at a tradeshow. OK, so how many of you were here last night at the party yelling at the top



of your lungs to the person four inches away from you, over the music, about something that's like coming down in three months. Here's the new Panama release of Yahoo, and here's the feature set it will have.

You don't want to blog that kind of stuff. This is the MySpace phenomenon. How many of you have ever been on MySpace and looked at what these kids are writing about? It's unbelievable. It's like they have no idea that the world at-large is reading this. I go and I look at MySpace and there are these kids talking about how one of the other kids in their class is such a jerk and how they should get back at them. And it's all laced with profanity, I don't care about that, but the fact is they're having these discussions, and do you realize there are millions of people that can just pop in and read this? And this is what they're going to get about you?

And it's the same thing with your blog. If you have a blogger, then they need to stay focused. I will come out very strongly that a business blog should just be about business topics. If you want to write movie reviews, you want to talk about restaurants, you want to talk about problems in your family or something, then just go and take it to another blog.

Now there are some very well-known bloggers that don't do that. So for example Robert Scoble, recently with Microsoft, who just departed, probably one of the most high-profile bloggers out there, and his mother recently passed away. And that was a very sad situation, but here's a guy who represents Microsoft in the blogosphere more than anyone else, and he is taken as the voice of Microsoft, even though he denies it, and he starts writing about his mom, and then he starts talking about how her choices for healthcare were stupid ones. It was on such a tangent that the people I've spoken with, no one will publicly admit this, but as many people appreciated that he was being honest and open, there were more people, I've found, that were just so turned off by that that they just unsubscribed or stopped paying attention to it.

If you represent your company, you need to do it in a professional manner. If you're at the bar here, you need to realize that you're on the clock. Again, if we were back 40 years, we'd be talking about the Christmas party problem. When you're in a big corporation and you go to the Christmas party, you're still on the clock. You can't get drunk and make a pass at your boss's husband, or wife, or whatever. Well, you can, but you know what will happen? January first, what's going to be on your desk is a pink slip. But it was a party!

So blogging is the same sort of thing. And there, just as the bane of spam hits everywhere else, it also hits blogs. The good news is there are some very nice tools that can make that essentially invisible to you if you use modern blogging tools. There are some developers that have put an amazing amount of work into this. And I'll tell you, on one of my busier



sites, I get somewhere between a third to a half a million visitors a month, and I would say that I only maybe see two or three spam comments a month. It's basically none.

Versus the 40 or 50 legitimate comments that come in every day. Now that's not for lack of trying, I can see in my logs that these spammers are hitting me a couple thousand times a day, but the tools are automatically filtering it out, so I don't have to.

But again, you have to pay attention. If we were back eight years ago, we'd talk about guest books. You can't just put up a guestbook and then leave it and come back six months later, because what will happen is there'll be just awful stuff. And all these people putting in things that you'd never want associated with your company. You have to pay attention. And so it is with your blog, if you have comments.

And I will say this last one probably isn't as relevant for this conference, but at a lot of the conferences I speak at there are people that sell tools that let you make fake blogs. So that you steal content from other sites, or you tap into RSS feeds, and this automatically produces things that look like your own blog content, and slip in your own affiliate codes, and the fact is, I call that digital pollution. And if that works today, it won't work tomorrow because that's the opposite of what I'm talking about, which is figuring out a tool that lets you produce good quality content with frequency. That's just garbage, don't use those. You can ask me afterward if you have questions about that.

So, recommended blogging techniques: it may be the case that I said you can do anything you want with the tools, but let me just say that there are some best practices. I do think you should allow comments, I do think that you should have an authentic voice, and what I mean by that is actually give someone that job, or do it yourself. Put your picture on the blog, and just be yourself. None of this, "well our corporation believes..." which is like, "I think," and is much more personable, and is much more engaging for people, and that's what this is about. This is about putting a face on your company. It's about engaging your potential visitors and potential customers and turning them into customers whatever it is you're trying to sell them or convince them to do.

I think you should identify your bias and relationship, I'll be showing you an example in just a second and you'll see how I do that. But this is a classic thing is that if you are an affiliate, and you are writing about a product, tell us that you're an affiliate for that product. So that when we read that, we know. So how many of you realize if you read something like PCWorld or MacWorld, that they don't publish bad reviews? I was reviews editor at Advance Systems magazine in San Francisco, it was an international computer publication, and I'll tell you, we had the same policy, if our reviewer didn't have something good to say, we would just find a different review to put there.



That's really, really important to know, because that means that these reviews aren't untainted. Right? Because then one of the pressures that happens is that we have eight pages of editorial to fill, and we have nine reviews, "let's make sure we find something good to say about this." It's not a bad thing, but you need to know they're doing it. It's like the automotive section in the newspaper is just perfect example of this. The automotive section is paid for by the advertisers, and if they write anything bad about any car, then the local Chevy dealer pulls out. And so the automotive section is not, and there's no content there, it's just ads. It really is, even if there is someone writing about it.

Establish credibility. Again, if you know your subject space, then talk about that. Share your knowledge. This is something that a lot of individuals and entrepreneurs have a hard time getting. "Oh, well why would I give away any of my knowledge, when I can sell it?" Because you can sell a lot more effectively if you can give away this much to sell that much.

Write about what you know - Share testimonials, here's another great one. How many of you get testimonials from customers and just basically circular file them? Where do we put testimonials, we have our page of testimonials up. As you get testimonials, add them to your blog. People love the sort-of verification, and it lowers the friction of the transaction by you saying, "Here's what Joe just sent in. We released this new product and here's what he just said, and here's our comment on what he's saying." Really, really powerful stuff.

Follow your industry and market news and stay focused. Again, if you're writing something about the music industry, just write about the music industry. If you want to wander a little bit afield and if you want to review the latest "Pirates" movie, then at least write about the music in the movie. Because people come to you expecting some sort of focus. You see this in magazines. There are very few magazines that cover everything from teen lovelorn advice to how to get your cell phone's ring tones to work. There are very few magazines that are that broad. Magazines tend to focus so you know what you're getting, and so they can appeal to a certain demographic. Well, blogs are the same way. The blogs that I like the least are the ones where they think they can write about everything in the whole world, and they have no authority on any of it.

So that's enough. Let me show you a little bit. Because it's much more fun to see things than to talk about them. Here's my business blog, and here, if you are so inclined, here's a piece "Maybe affiliate marketing isn't such a good idea after all." You can see here that I am trying to use the best practices, I have a photograph, I have a little bio. This establishes credibility and gives me a personality. And now you feel like you know who I am, more or less. Then here you can see this one does have a date and time, and it shows you that there are four comments.



Now, again for those of you that might have discussion forums, if you have an article that you post that has four responses, in a forum environment that looks like it's not very popular. But on a blog, having any comments at all means that you're popular. So, same traffic level, all of a sudden now you have a way of making it appear to be more popular.

That's very cool. And let me show you the back end of this is that I have a single unified interface for all of my websites, because I'm using the same blogging tool for them all. In fact, my sister's website, which is artdolls, is also here. She has a separate account, so what this means is that if you're an affiliate manager, you could actually give different affiliate vendors that you work with, they might have separate areas. And you have this super control over the whole thing.

So we go to AskDaveTaylor, and I'm going to actually just step through to have them pre-loaded. And here are the entries that I have, and here's what I want to point out, is that I have entries scheduled for the 18th, 19th and 20th of this month already. Why?

Because I'm taking some time off again. So I'm starting to write ahead. That's what I'm talking about with the schedule. Can you see what I'm talking about here? I clicked on my own Google AdSense ads, now scheduled to show up on the 18th, I'm done - I don't have to think about it again. The software itself will automatically do all the work.

And the one with the little pencil next to it: "How do I improve my email newsletter deliverability?" That's what this looks like. So now, finally we're looking at a blog entry from the back-end. If you've been thinking this sounds really hard and complex, it really isn't. If you've used a web-based email program, and I'm sure everyone has, that's about as complex as this gets. So, the way I have mine configured is I have a title, I have the entry as the question, and then the extended entry is the answer. And then I have some categorizations, and by the way, the categories that I use are based on keyword research.

So when I talk about search engine optimization and such, I do use SEO. But I don't use it on a daily basis. So that's why when I say cell phones, its two words, not one word. Because cell phones, two words, is searched for about 10 times more often than one word.

So here's what it looks like. So I have my answer goes on for a couple paragraphs, and this is something that actually, I had someone else write most of this. So that's even nicer, I got someone else to do it.

Now, what I'd like to do, I'm going to go ahead and publish this. Now I'm going to show you this article isn't on my site. So the most recent piece that I wrote on this particular blog is about NASCAR. OK, now I'm going to go back and I'm just going to go ahead and publish this. So again, I'm want to show you vs. emailing a Word document to your



webmaster and hoping that they'll get it, we're going to just go ahead and publish this, let's make sure -- is today the 10th? Today is the 11th, OK. Let's try to be reasonably accurate. So I'm just going to change that, you wouldn't really need to. And so I changed the status from unpublished to published, then I'm going to push this button, now let's watch what it does.

Now you should be thinking, "How do you add a page to your website?" It is now rebuilding not just that entry, it is rebuilding my entire website. All the other pages on this site, thousands of pages will now link to this new page, the site map will be updated, all of that good stuff is happening, and the new page is being built, and the home page is being updated to include this new content. All that's happening all the heavy lifting it's doing - I don't have to do any of it. And, shortly, my site's pretty huge, which is why this takes a while. OK, now here's the next thing it's doing. I'm not waiting for the search engines to come to me, I'm going and telling them, "Hey, I have new content!" This is a really exciting characteristic of blogs, is that blogs notify blog search engines when you have new content. This is called pinging. And so it's telling, for example, MyYahoo. See that one about five down, api.my.yahoo.com? And it's done. That's it.

So what's happened now? Well, what's happened is that number one, if I reload my page, if the network gods are with us, this will work. OK, "How can I improve my email newsletter deliverability?" I just added a new page to my website, but I did a lot more than that, because all of the cross-links all work, the site map is updated, and even more excitedly, that all of those blog search engines, which are just intermediate way-stations on the way to real search engines now know that I have new content. So as soon as five minutes from now, someone could go to a site like Technorati, and search for deliverability, and find my article. Well, that's really sweet, verses me adding a new page to my website and waiting 90 days, maybe? Boy that's a whole different game.

And so I want to show you this piece too, because this is actually, through convenient timing, and affiliate link that I'm using. So first off notice Google has already, this is the first time I've ever looked at this page and Google has already figured out what ads to put there. That's really nice. I won't tell you how much I earn off Google AdSense, but I will tell you that it's more, more, more than paying my mortgage. I can tell you that privately.

So we go down and here's my answer, actually, here's my answer missing a piece that I will fix later. So here's this finally if this is a topic that's critical to your business, notice here this is actually an affiliate link. This actually goes through the payloads program which is an intermediate for PayPal, which let's you do digital delivery of content. And so, my friend, Anne, wrote this e-book. And I signed up for her affiliate program, and this is how I'm going to make, if someone clicks on this, I make \$50 if they buy it.



But, since I'm a blogger, I want to keep that credibility, I want to keep the honesty of everything, so I have the little note on the bottom: "Note the above are affiliate links. By clicking them, you help AskDaveTaylor keep the digital lights on. If you'd rather not use the affiliate link for any reason, please go to" and I don't make it real easy, I just give the domain name and you have to type it in, "isipp.com to purchase a book directly from Anne. It's still a great product, however you buy it." Why did I put that in? Because I don't want someone to come to me and say, "Oh, the only reason you're writing about this is because it has an affiliate link and you're going to make some money."

I think this embodies in a lot of ways, everything that I want to talk about here. In terms of the world of affiliates, I will encourage those of you that are affiliates to look at what it would be like to focus on a very small number of products and really, really change the way you talk about those products. So much of this is all, this whole business is so database driven, and I think that's very counter-productive. Because if it's all database driven, and you have your thousand offers of the week, then so do six-thousand other sites. But if you just pick a very small number of those, and you really focus on what the value is there, then you can really change how things work, and then someone's going to search for again, "Disney VISA card," and find you and click on your link, and maybe you'll have less breadth, but your depth will be more, and you'll be more profitable.

So, this ends, with three minutes to spare, my talk. I would definitely love to open it for questions, but before I do that if someone, maybe you standing in the back can go get the bowl of business cards? And as you walk, if you don't mind, it's just outside on the table, thank you. I appreciate that. And those of you who haven't put your business card in, I would encourage you to do so, and this fabulous book could be yours. So while I'm waiting for the bowl, this is just eerily like going to church somehow, "alms for the poor." While I'm waiting for that to meander forward, are there questions?

[inaudible question]

So the questions is: if he is just about to start a new program with LinkShare, and he's asking if he should have a blog, and if so, what should he put on there and what should he not? I would put on there everything you can to make affiliates be successful. You might even have tutorials on how to go onto LinkShare and find your affiliate codes. And I would have any information that would help people learn how to actually be successful as affiliates. If you have collateral information, I love the idea of going to Commission Junction or LinkShare, finding a vendor, figuring out what link to click, seeing the creatives, clicking a button, getting the text, that's way too much work.

I don't feel like these vendors are trying to make me be successful, I feel like it's just this



big database that I have to wade through. But if you can turn that around and you can say, "here's our program, here's our product, here's the latest news, here's what we've just announced the new version of, and here's why it's exciting," and the more you can do that, number one, the more you empower your affiliates, number two the more they have a feedback channel for you, because they can say, "you guys, I don't understand, you keep innovating in this area, but none of the people I talk to care about that area! What about this area? Why can't you do something there?" And further, the third thing is that people that aren't yet affiliates can then find you.

[inaudible question]

Well, the competitors will find your blog, but odds are pretty good that they already know everything about what you're doing. You don't want to reveal anything confidential -- you don't want to violate any trust or privacy, and you don't want to pre-announce products. But you don't want to do that with affiliates anyway, because it's a sure bet [picks winning card from bowl] and the winner is, it's my mom! [laughter] Busy Bodies, how about Heidi Panelli?

[applause]

Thank you, Heidi, nice t-shirt, too.

So, the question of, when do you reveal too much information? That's something that you need to figure out. But every affiliate you have, non-disclosures mean nothing. Every affiliate you have is going to tell everyone else what you tell them. So if you're not willing to tell your affiliates something, you shouldn't be blogging about it. And conversely, if it's something you're telling your regular affiliates, then why not put it out in the public and have people that aren't yet affiliates find out about it. Again, this is the whole dilemma of you communicating with your affiliates via email is that people that aren't yet affiliates don't know what you're saying in that message. And further, when they do finally get to join they don't get all those back messages.

But if you put the whole thing in a blog, and you could password-protect it - you could have a blog that once you're an affiliate you get the password to come here, that would be one way you could do that. But if you didn't do that, then you at least would have the benefit of people who were just Googling or Yahooing. They don't feel like verbs in the same way that Googling does. People that are just poking around, looking for new affiliate programs to join, they're not going to find your stuff because it's behind a password. And so, I'm just a big fan of trying to actually have information out there, and if there's private stuff, if you have a half-dozen of your exclusive top affiliate merchants



or something, well you're going to have a different relationship with them anyway. Those are the ones you might fly to your corporate office once a year to have a big weekend round-table. Right? But generally, I guess that would be my advice to you on that.

Other questions? We are perilously out of time, but that's OK.

[inaudible question]

Yeah, so one of the key ways to gain traffic on your blog, is to start commenting on other peoples' blogs. Just start being part of the community. I liken this to, if you went to the cocktail party last night, and you hung a sign around your neck that said, "I have really interesting things to say, come and talk to me," and you just stood in the corner, do you think you would have been a real hit at the party? No, but if you start getting involved in other peoples' conversations, then they eventually will come around to what you want to talk about. So then you can engage by being part of a community, as opposed to standing there, and a lot of companies that blog never go out and comment on anyone else's blogs, and they just do their own blog and wait for things to happen. And it's just not a successful strategy; I think again exactly like having that sign around your neck at a cocktail party. It's just not very exciting.

[inaudible question]

Thoughts and comments on different blog tools. That's a big huge, that's at least another hour, in fact, thank you, that's a great transition. I just wanted, just as we wrap up, I did want to point out that I did actually spend a couple of months with a colleague of mine, Brad Fallon who knows more about SEO than pretty much anyone I know, and we actually built a course that is a 10-week course on blogging, and I know I'm not supposed to be selling anything here, but, you know, it's a business, and I need to pay the mortgage.

Oh no, I do that with AdSense, I need to put the kids in clothes, and so, I would be happy to talk to you about this and I do have special pricing for this conference for that course, and the people who have gone through it say that it's really just a great way to get started.

But in terms of the tools, I'll just say that Word Press and Moveable Type are both world-class. And I know people that are doing great things with both of them. And Word Press is free, and Moveable Type is \$100. So it's not like it's a huge financial investment in this. And so one final question, that would be you.

[inaudible question]



So the question is: how do you go and find other bloggers that are writing about your topic? I will show you one place you can go is Technorati.com. And you can go to Technorati and just start searching for key phrases. Now, remember this is the blogging community, this isn't necessarily the affiliate community, so if you were to look for, "Who's blogging about affiliate programs for mortgages," then what you'll probably find is spam. But if you were to blog about people that are having problems paying their mortgage, now you might be able to find some people and you might be able to add comments, and at that point you wouldn't want to say, "please come to my site to read about mortgages," you could actually say, "if you're stuck in an ARM and you're worried that the interest rate is going up, one of the ways you could refinance that is..." and give away a little information.

Key, key concept: again if you're going to a party and you're going to a network mixer, you don't want to just say, "My company solves that problem. Here, take my card. My company does that. We do that, we can solve that." You want to tell them what it is, "Oh you know, here's how you can address that."

[recording ends]