Part #1 How to start a successful (or failing) Blog in 2013!

As some may know, I have run a successful web site (hearth.com) since 1995. We have a very active forum community and many other features, but most importantly a good community of helpful members who spend their time helping others. This has resulted in MILLIONS of pages being read each month as well as a community which mostly takes care of itself.

When I started Hearth.com the internet was like the wild west – very little "land" had been claimed, and a decent site on ANY subject had a very good chance of success if the basics were in place. However, now that anyone can – and millions do – start web sites, I think it would be a LOT harder to succeed when starting from scratch.

As an experiment, I am doing just that…and I will blog here on the effort so that others can learn from my failures and successes.

In a general sense, I would say the odds of success for bloggers in 2013 is very low – only because of the vast number of people who are writing them. As I sometimes lament "If everyone blogs, how many people can possibly read each of theirs?". We only have so much capacity for soaking up information!

As an introduction, I decided to start a blog and forum on the new consumer "drones", more accurately called multirotor aircraft or quadcopters. These first 3 posts will detail my thought process and actions in the one month period in which I studied the topic, made the decision to start, and started writing.

The Idea – why another Blog?

The first thing I did was look at the other sites which were addressing this market. This is a very important step in the process, since a newcomer must have something to add to the existing body of work. What I found was that there were some very big and popular forums already discussing these aircraft! In fact, some of them were so popular that even ONE subject in a forum post (thread) would gain hundreds of thousands of views!

This answered the most important question – that is, is there a market for the subject? YES!

The most prolific site on the subject is probably rcgroups.com, which is a 15+ year old site that addresses all aspects of radio controlled vehicles. There are two or three other such large sites. Taken together, these sites might have discouraged me from starting out because the subject is well covered. BUT, I looked again and wondered if all of these existing outlets were overlooking something….something which I could address. In other words, I looked for a niche where I might fit in.

I think I found it! The niche would be to address the beginners and intermediates in this new technology. The other sites are highly technical and the multirotor content is usually buried deeply inside of a list of dozens of forums. The same site addresses radio controlled cars, boats, etc. as well as some very technical aspects of DIY building, electronics, etc.

Since I am a beginner myself, it would work for me to address other beginners and the general public. My strengths are as a writer and with a larger overview of the march of technology as opposed to the gory details of how the circuit boards work. In conclusion, I decided that having a KISS (keep is simple, stupid!) type of web site on this emerging boom would fit both me and a potential audience.

Ok, so the decision is made. I'm going to do it!

Now, what next? In my case, I started on two efforts…..

1. Checking out potential domain names
2. Checking to see if an existing site might sell to me, instead of starting from scratch.

I will detail the why and how in part #2 of this series!

The Blog/Forum that this series is referring to is http://droneflyers.com