

Blogging and Productivity on the road

One of the challenges that we have as technologists and bloggers is the ability to find time to blog no keep up with learning while still maintaining a good life balance. I had an article nearly done for today's #vDM30in30 but this seemed like the ideal time to approach this subject instead.

Writing on the Road

I've taken to using Evernote as my preferred writing platform because of the ability to sync between all of my devices easily. Having made the error in the past of always live writing in WordPress on the web, I've lost a couple of articles to internet connection drops and such. Not fun.

There can be some formatting adventures when you paste from Evernote into WordPress, so be careful with that. Plus, the autocorrect is shaky sometimes and you may find that it lets you get away with some vicious misspelling on occasion. In other words, always proofread before you publish.

Other than the sync capability, Evernote is a great collaboration platform. It's the very engine that drives Virtual Design Master and a few other projects that I work on.

Now that we've covered the "How?" of the writing challenge, what about the "When?" for writing while on the road. The short answer is "Anywhere, whenever you can".

Because my new job has me travelling much more this I done before, I've become quite good at using time like that spent in airport lounges and during flight in order to get some content committed.

It isn't easy to squeeze it in, and at first it can be a real difficulty as you work out how to go from place to place and then get into a mood for content creation. Much like the 30 blogs in 30 days initiative has taught me, it's like a muscle that needs to be trained.

Learning on the Road

Learning in general can also be a challenge. The good thing about travel and flying is that it will give you some time where you are able to read more than you may normally do at home.

I am a strong believer in the power of continuous learning as a way to keep fresh and enhance your skills and career. My routine while I'm away from home is to always have one or two books on my Kindle app on the iPad, plus I often download some PDF content which can be stored in iBooks.

Another thing is to be able to store offline learning content such as Pluralsight videos or iTunesU video and audio. Podcasts are also great for when you are on the road. Many people even use these while driving in the same way as an audiobook. Those can also be great resources for passing time and adding to the learning funnel.

Even if you aren't rapidly tearing through books and other learning resources, just think that it is more than you may normally have time for, so any learning is a bonus.

Planning on the Road

This is another Evernote task for me. There are a number of tools that I use on the web, but when no internet access is available, Evernote with offline notebooks is my tool of choice.

If you can get access to the Internet, I'd suggest something like Asana and LeanKit for task tracking. These are good for centrally storing your task management, but in a pinch, Apple Notes and Reminders are also helpful.

Tweetups

When you're in a town you're not normally from, don't forget to use Twitter to find some of the local crowd you may be able to meet up with. We have a very nice community with people who are always keen to connect in person too. On this recent trip I managed to meet Kenneth Hui in Boston along with Matthew Brender, plus I met a new Twitter friend Craig Tracey who is local to Boston.

This is what makes communities like ours fun. As Stephen Foskett once told me "Somr people don't understand it, but my Twitter friends are my real friends."

Rest is Good

Another thing to remember when travelling is that you tend to do more than you would at home, so while I'm giving lots of ideas on how to use free time for productivity tasks, don't forget to take a break and get some down time too.

Keeping connected with people who can't be with you during travel days is also a big part of what makes it better. Honestly, if it weren't for FaceTime and iMessage, I wouldn't make it through the day. That is one of the greatest parts of being accessible with these tools. Even when you are on the road, you can still add a few comforts that can help you make the best of it.

Hopefully this is helpful for those who are currently, or who may do travel for work at some point.

Ironically I'm writing this on my iPad Mini 3 in seat 13A en routes from Boston to Toronto.