



**SPI Podcast Session #55 -
Blog to eBook to Membership Site in Less Than a year
with Trevor Page**

show notes at: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session55>

Pat: This is the Smart Passive Income podcast with Pat Flynn, session #55! Say "Smart"...

Keoni: S-smart?

Pat: Passive...

Keoni: Passive.

Pat: Income...

Keoni: Income.

Pat: Podcast.

Keoni: Podcast.

Pat: Smart Passive Income podcast.

Keoni: Smart Passive In'podca.

Pat: Hehehe!

Announcer: Welcome to the Smart Passive Income podcast, where it's all about working hard now so you can sit back and reap the benefits later.

And now your host: He's a little obsessed with Buffalo wings, Pat Flynn!

Pat: Hey, hey, what's up, everybody? This is Pat Flynn and welcome to SPI Podcast session #55. Let's not waste any time today and dive right into the content. I have a great success story to share with you today. A success story interview that is actually outside of the blogging "Make Money Online" social media niche, which I know are your favorite kind of interviews, and they are my favorite too, actually. People like us doing amazing things online, serving their audience and making money as a result.

This person that we're going to interview today has a great story to share, full of struggles, failures and of course wins, and a lot of great tips and lessons learned along



the way. So let's just get right into it. Let's give a warm welcome to Trevor Page. Trevor, thanks for coming on the show!

Trevor: Yeah, no problem, Pat! It's a pleasure!

Pat: So, tell everyone out there what it is that you do and how you got there.

Trevor: All right. Well, for myself, I'm a computer programmer pretty much since birth.

Pat: [amused] Since birth?

Trevor: Since birth, yep.

Pat: Nice!

Trevor: I'm wired for some reason to be a computer programmer, and I did the whole thing, went to school, you know, got some good grades, got a degree, and I started working a 9 to 5 job. And I did that for about 5 years or so, and it was great. I learned a lot, I worked for a fantastic company, and life was good. And then I actually started a small business, spent about 2 years building a product and released it with absolutely no sales. [laughs]

Pat: Oh, wow.

Trevor: So I put a lot of blood, sweat and tears into this product that really was a complete flop.

Pat: And you started that while you had your 9 to 5 job.

Trevor: Yes, for sure.

Pat: And it just didn't do what you had hoped.

Trevor: Right, yeah. So that was one of my little failures in my past. So I've always had this little, I had this drive to do, own a business and do business-y things, I suppose you could say.

But then I stumbled upon this gentleman called Pat Flynn back in July of 2012, and I started listening to your podcast and learning and I was hooked. I loved the stuff, I loved your approach. You know, I think it was the missing piece for me in my skillset. I was a great programmer, and I was decent at business, but I didn't know too much about marketing and really Internet business, so you helped fill in those gaps.

Pat: Well, thank you. Thanks for the shout out, I mean, you didn't have to do that, but thank you.



Trevor: Yeah, for sure, Pat. So in July, actually, so right--almost off the bat from, you know, listening to your podcast, I launched a website called howtoprogramwithjava.com. And it was just sort of my attempt to give this whole Internet business thing a try.

Like I said, I'm a programmer from birth. I love programming and I also found out that I'm actually a decent teacher, and it was something that my mother always said I was good at, but I never really listened to my mom because, I don't know, they're supposed to say that kind of thing to you, right?

Pat: Right, exactly.

Trevor: But I sort of put it to the test with this blog, and I had FANTASTIC results. People absolutely went crazy for these tutorials and said things like, "Trevor, these are the tutorials I've been looking for! I've been scouring the Internet and reading books and doing everything I could and nothing really clicked until I found your site." And I was like "Are you serious? That's fantastic!"

I had this talent that wasn't exactly hidden, but rather I just sort of ignored it, to be this teacher. So that's my business. I have howtoprogramwithjava.com and I've been building it up since July.

Pat: What are the components of that website? You said you started as a blog. Kind of how has it grown since...?

Trevor: Yeah. I started off with a 5-part series that teaches the 5 basic concepts of any programming language. Because with programming languages, there's just--like I said, basic concepts that can kind of be applied to any programming language. So I wanted to teach people those basic fundamentals before launching into specific Java programming language stuff.

So I launched that and that's where people were giving me all these great reviews, and actually I spent about...I spent a few days or weeks just kind of firing emails out and getting the word out about this website. And one of the people I sent this email to was Lifehacker. I think you're aware of lifehacker.com?

Pat: Yes.

Trevor: So they actually liked my stuff and they posted a blog post on their blog about my website, and it was this, you know, hockey stick effect for my traffic that went to my website. It was INSANE. So that really helped launch the blog.

And from there the components that I've put into it have just been tutorials, mainly, as well as assignments that I've put in there most recently, so they can actually put their



knowledge to the test with these assignments. And I also launched an eBook from those tutorials and started a membership website also based on those tutorials. So I've been busy!

Pat: That's so cool! Okay, so let's go back to the beginning. I want to talk about that business that you tried to create when you were working 9 to 5. We don't have to get into specifics of what that was, but maybe in one or two sentences, or a brief explanation--why do you think that business failed?

Trevor: I think...it was too narrow a scope. There weren't too many customers that would go along with it. It was multi-targeted to where I live in Southern Ontario, so there was really a limited number of customers that we could really get, so we'd have to charge a lot of money for this particular software. That was one factor; it was perhaps too expensive for people.

And the second factor was, I think we were just too early in releasing this software, because the industry that it was released in--they're still working with paper and pen, and it's hard to pull them away from paper and pen. That's what the product was supposed to do, was help pull them away from that, but it just seems like they're not ready to make the changes yet, so.

Pat: Right. So it seems like it was because it was locally based, I guess, or location-based, which takes away the rest of the world as far as your customers are concerned.

Trevor: Big time.

Pat: And then maybe...maybe there was just not enough market research done to figure out that maybe "Oh, well, they're not ready to move to this kind of platform yet" I guess you could say.

Trevor: Absolutely.

Pat: I think that is a very common problem with people, you know. They sort of get ahead of themselves. You said you spent two years and probably a number of resources, probably a little bit of money setting this up. When a lot of people--they probably should focus a lot of their efforts at first to just figure out who their target market is and what it is that they would want. I mean, it would be really easy just to call some people up and be like "Hey, would you use this?" and if you got a bunch of no's, then you would immediately know.

Trevor: Exactly, yeah. If I'd talked to you two years before I started this, I would've been a lot better off. Although, I mean, I've learned a lot along the way, so I wouldn't trade that for anything, so.



Pat: Yeah, absolutely. I'm glad you said that, because you know, we all live to learn and go through failures, and as long as you can keep pushing forward, that's good. And obviously, it's working for you. So ahead of that, you said July 2012, kind of discovered Smart Passive Income, and you started howtoprogramwithjava.com. Why did you choose that particular niche?

Trevor: Well, like I said, it was my goal to sort of try this teaching thing out because I had this idea that perhaps I was good at it. And I really like talking about programming. It actually--that sort of realization I stumbled upon one...it was a Friday evening, I remember it clearly. I was in a pub with one of my really close friends, and we were just sort of talking about our lives and the direction they were going, and my buddy said "Hey Trevor, why don't you try teaching me something about this programming stuff that you do?"

And I literally spent probably two hours on a Friday night in a pub teaching my buddy about programming, and I was having a ball. Like, the time just flew by! So that's when I knew I really like programming. Plus, he actually understood what I was saying, so I was like "Oh, okay, maybe I'm actually good at this sort of stuff," so, that's sort of how that came into fruition.

Pat: Yeah, that's awesome. I love that. That just shows you right there how beneficial it is to be hanging around with cool people who are interested in what you do and who might push you a little bit.

Trevor: Exactly, yeah, for sure.

Pat: I love that! So you started the blog, and you said that you were getting results right off the bat. You said you started a 5-part series on basic concepts; was that sort of the first set of blog posts that you had on that site?

Trevor: Yeah, that was the first set. I sort of...it was almost, I don't know, I don't remember now if it was an accident or not, but you tend to get a lot of results, or at least a lot of interest in your posts when you do the sort of formula of "X number of tips" or hints or whatever for a particular subject.

Pat: Right.

Trevor: So mine was "The 5 Basic Concepts of Programming." So not only did I include some pretty good tutorials in there that were really down to earth and could put programming talk into plain English, but people really liked the whole 5-part series. You know, "5 tips to whatever."

So yeah, within a month, I think it was within a month, Lifehacker picked it up and posted it and it was just--you know, I jumped out of my seat. I flipped over to my Google Analytics, and you know, Google Analytics has that real-time mode where you



can see how many people are on your site at that given moment, and my previous record--not that I was keeping track--was 11.

Pat: 11!

Trevor: [laughs] And when I logged in this time it said "250" or something. And I jumped out of my seat. I was like "What is happening right now??"

Pat: All on your site at the same time.

Trevor: All on my site at the same time! Within one month, I had 250+ people on my site at that given moment.

Pat: That's so cool.

Trevor: And it was incredible, yeah. I think I ended up getting something like 40,000 people visiting that month, which was in August, and you know, that's really all because of Lifehacker. It was insane.

Pat: You know, it's funny when you mention that. There was--they seem to be sort of the catalyst behind, kind of, you getting known out there and being shared a bunch, and that kind of happened with me, too. I was working really hard on Smart Passive Income, and things were going okay, and then all of the sudden I get featured on Yaro Starak's blog, [Entrepreneurs Journey](#), and I talked about this many times in the past, but I feel like that was the moment when things really started to happen, and I feel like that's the same for you here. It's obvious that that's the case.

Now, I think you did something really smart there when you started your blog. A lot of people, when they start their own websites or blogs, they start writing these random posts, you know, that are probably really good--you know, a lot of people have a lot of energy when they start their websites for the first time--but you took it a step further, and you actually started at the beginning. You did the 5 basic...this is stuff that anybody who wants to get into programming should understand first.

Trevor: Right.

Pat: And I think that's really important, because that gives people a starting point, and people who arrive on your site from the beginning, whether through Lifehacker or whatever, or now through Google, they're going to start exactly where they need to start, and they're going to lick that content hopefully, if it's good, and then they're going to stick with you and get everything else and then build a relationship with you that way and get your books and join your membership site and stuff.

I want to commend you, that's really good. Because I see a lot of people start blogs, and then they just have a random post, that's like--it's a top 5 post, which is like you



said, a very popular thing to do, but it's not...you know, it's not going to help a brand-new person who comes to the site for the first time.

Trevor: Right. I think I sort of took that approach--well, at least for me it made sense. That was a logical starting point. My goal was to teach people how to program, so you got to really start at the beginning.

I suppose the target that I could see from 10,000 miles away was this eBook that I wanted to end up publishing, so I was like--you know, you map out the topics and chapters of your eBook using sticky notes or something, and then you know, you have all of these blog posts and they're all laid out and you can shuffle them around and decide what kind of order you want to put them in.

So yeah, it really helps to do that and to take a step back and look at the big picture and understand where you're going. That's definitely very important.

Pat: Yeah, that's great. Now I do want to get into the eBook really very soon, but I want to talk more about beyond the Liferhacker--I mean, describe how you contacted them, actually. I'm really interested to know how you got on their radar.

Trevor: Yeah, so, I mean, I visit Liferhacker frequently, and I know that they published articles about programming before; I think they did something about JavaScript, which is a different language than Java. So at the very bottom of their site, you can click on a link that says "send in a tip" or something like that. I said "Oh, okay, I'll send in a tip and just let them know and say 'Hey, I just launched this new website.'"

And that's pretty much what the email said. I said "Hi, my name's Trevor, I've launched this new website, this is what it's supposed to do and this is what it's targeted at doing. I think it might be pretty beneficial to your readers. Just thought you might want to know. Thanks very much, Trevor."

And you know, I sent it out and thought nothing of it and then...yeah. So that's how I got onto Liferhacker.

Pat: I think that's really cool. Because a lot of people won't take that initiative, you know. Especially with a large site like that. Most people would probably think "Oh, well there wouldn't be a chance...you know, ever, to get featured, so I'm not even going to try."

Trevor: Yeah. Well, I guess you throw a bunch of stuff on the wall and see what sticks, right?

Pat: How long did that email take you to write?



Trevor: It was probably a whole, from start to finish, from logging onto the website to sending it, it was probably 5 minutes. And it was, you know--

Pat: It changed everything!

Trevor: Yeah. Best 5 minutes of my life, right there. That's the most effective time that I've worked to this date.

Pat: That's so cool. Did you do anything else to get traffic and get noticed and get out there? Did anything else work or not work for you?

Trevor: Oh, for sure. Yeah. I tried...doing...I followed through your whole [backlinking strategy](#), and tried that stuff, and I purchased [Unique Article Wizard](#) and that kind of thing. It's tough because those are long-term things, right? Those are things that you need to look at over a long span period of time before you start to see some results, which is kind of in contrast to how I am. I'm one of those, you know, Generation Y, instant gratification people. So it was tough for me to keep putting that effort in. So when I got the Lifehacker scenario unfolding, that was fantastic for my instant gratification. Definitely.

Pat: Yeah. Well that just shows right there where our time might be better spent! Maybe doing all the gaming Google type of stuff isn't the right thing to do. And I really don't think it's the right thing to do, even though I know it works and now with Google's algorithm changes it works sometimes. Sometimes it doesn't.

But I think...what you're doing in kind of reaching out to people--I think that's what we need to do now, and when I do more niche sites in the future, I'm going to select topics where I would be comfortable actually getting on the phone and talking to companies and trying to figure out stuff or talking to people and, you know, interacting that way. I mean, really, that's a great way to stand out because not everyone's doing that.

Trevor: Yeah, for sure. Another thing I wanted to mention before we move on is some research I've done initially. I've actually purchased the [Market Samurai](#) package and for me, it was tough because I needed to understand, I needed to have something to compare against, right? And I was actually--I made a mistake. I got the Market Samurai and I was trying to figure out what I wanted to name my website, so I was doing my keyword research, and I pulled up, you know, [Security Guard Training](#), and I took a look at the Pat Flynn site and seeing his sort of detail and what not. And I saw, it said something like roughly around 700 daily hits for security guard training if you were ranked first in Google, or something.



So I said "Okay, Pat's doing good with that, so maybe I should shoot for 700." Then I landed on the keywords "How to Program With Java" and my number was something on the order of 17,000, and I was flabbergasted. I said "Oh my--that's perfect!" It's that how to type of thing, which is great, and 17,000 hits a day. You know, I had stars in my eyes and I pulled the trigger.

But then the mistake that I made was that I didn't look at all the data in the Market Samurai. One of the pieces that were probably pretty important was the phrase "too broad," which I think was--it's the percentage of people who actually type in to Google the exact phrase that you have typed in yourself, and mine was 0%.

So I'm definitely not getting 17,000 daily hits from those keywords, so that's definitely a lesson learned from me, so be sure to pay attention to all the metrics and take everything into account before you pull the trigger.

Pat: That's a great lesson learned. Thank you for sharing that. Are you ranking at all in Google for any keywords, or are you getting traffic from any keywords?

Trevor: Yeah. Funny enough, my top keywords actually came from the article that Lifehacker linked to, because the article they linked to, the title of the blog post was something like "Programming 101: The 5 Basic Concepts of Programming." So the keywords I actually get most of my traffic from are Programming 101 and Programming Basic Concepts. I think #4 or 3 is "How to Program With Java."

So although I've been focusing on how to program with Java and try to get ranks on that keyword, that's just not how it played out in the end, so that was kind of interesting for me to see.

Pat: Yeah. I think, you know, with something like "How to Program With Java," something so many daily hits, that's like your platinum keyword, that's like your dream keyword, if you can get that. Even though there's probably a ton of competition out there for it, I would imagine!

However, if you keep writing great stuff related to that, like you said, the 5 Basic Concepts, Programming 101, you can still get a lot of great traffic from those other keywords. I mean, a lot of people focus too much on that primary keyword.

Trevor: That's true, yeah.

Pat: I'll give you an example, with Security Guard Training, which is my primary keyword, which I actually do rank #1 for. Have been for a while. That only counts for



about 20% of all my traffic. Most of my traffic comes from Google. The rest of it comes from 7-8,000 different keywords that I didn't even really purposefully target.

It's just keywords that match--the string matches stuff that I had written in my articles, and people type that in, and most of those are being searched drive 1-3 people a month, but over 7, 8000 different keywords, that adds up. So the lesson there is to just keep writing and keep publishing stuff and make sure it's related to whatever it is that you're primarily trying to hit.

Trevor: For sure. And I think one other thing to mention is, I was taking a look at my long tail keywords, and I actually ordered them all by the amount of time that that individual spent on my site. When you look at it, I had these--

Pat: Interesting.

Trevor: Yeah. I had these really long, awkward sort of searches that people type in, but they end up spending on average like 4 hours on my site, and I was like "Are you kidding me? How can anyone spend 4 hours on a website?" But they're all from these weird, sort of long tail keywords.

Pat: Do you have any examples that pop into your head?

Trevor: You know, as I was talking, saying that out loud, I was like "I should probably pull that up." But I'll do that while we move on. I'll get some of the examples.

Pat: Sure. So I want to talk about the eBook because an eBook is something that I kind of progressed to after I started Green Exam Academy. And it's done really well for me. It sounds like it's doing really well for you, too.

What--I was going to ask, what made you decide to write an eBook, but it sort of feels like based on some of your previous answers that you were always going to have this eBook come out anyway.

Trevor: Yeah, that was the end result for me for sure.

Pat: When did you finally start working on it?

Trevor: Um, it was...probably...I mean, really every single blog post I was putting out I was sort of intending those to be part of the eBook. So you could say that as soon as I started my blog, I was working on the eBook. But I definitely included extra stuff in the eBook that I didn't publish on the blog because you're actually getting people to pay for this so you want to actually make sure that there's some unique stuff for the people



that actually purchase. But the unique stuff I started throwing in probably a month or so before I was going to release the book.

Pat: When did you release the book?

Trevor: I think it was around mid-September of 2012.

Pat: Okay. Follow-up question, how did you release the book?

Trevor: I put it into PDF format and I signed up for [E-junkie](#) and created a sort of landing page for it to sort of sell it through there.

Pat: Right. So it's very similar to what I talk about in eBooks The Smart Way.

Trevor: Exactly! I picked up the Pat Flynn eBook, eBooks the Smart Way. And I also put it through Amazon as well.

Pat: Nice. Okay, so this is interesting. So you have the book being sold on your old platform on how to program with Java and also on Amazon.

Let's discuss this a little bit. I think the first question on everyone's mind is, you know, which one is doing better?

Trevor: Yes, okay, good question. It's actually a bit skewed right now, I think. I would say that the Amazon sales are doing better, but that's because I just enrolled in the Kindle Select program. Are you familiar with that one?

Pat: I am, but if you want to explain for everybody...

Trevor: Yeah, sure. So what it is is, you sort of give Amazon the rights or the ownership of your eBook in such a way that you will only be selling your eBook through Amazon and nowhere else. So they get exclusive right to sell it. Which you'd think "Why would you want to do that?" But they also provide a 5 day free promotional aspect for you, so you can actually give your book away for free during that 5 day period and hopefully get the word out about your book and have people, you know...share it with their friends and get their friends to buy it. So that's sort of the...

Pat: I think you can--I think in the Select Program you can also get money every time someone borrows your book, I think?

Trevor: That is true, too, yes. So it also allows the book to be borrowed, and yeah, that's based on a fairly complex algorithm with their certain pool of money that they



have, something like 1.4 million dollars and you get a small piece of that pie depending on how many people borrow your book.

To put that into focus, I think for my numbers for last month it was something like \$2 I received for every time someone borrowed the book. So it's not a massive sum of money, but hey, it helps, right?

Pat: Right. How about sales? How have sales been?

Trevor: Sales have been...it's interesting, there's an interesting story around it, because I was sort of...I've been looking so closely at the short term, looking week after week at the sales, and when you look so narrowly focused on just the numbers for the week and don't take a step back and look at the big picture, you can sort of get depressed, a little bit.

I was in this depressive sort of state because the sales that I was making was just not enough. To elaborate on that, because I had quit my job. Actually, I had quit my job in October, because I wanted to do this full time. And I was really passionate about it and I really wanted to give it my all.

So you have bills to pay...so yeah, looking at the short term, it wasn't looking like I was going to pay my bills. But then I took a step back, looked at the trends that were going on, and I noticed that almost consistently week after week my sales were increasing by about 25% every single week.

Pat: Wow. This is on Amazon.

Trevor: This is on Amazon, correct.

Pat: Why do you think it was going up like that?

Trevor: You know, I can only attribute it to...other than just the blog, I think, the amount of traffic that I was getting in my blog has also been increasing by about 25-35% month over month. And I definitely have the link from the blog to the book.

So that has to be one factor. But I think the other one is possibly the Kindle Select program with getting the word out. So really, when I realize that, when I realize that there's this consistent 25% growth, if those numbers continue, then I will actually have successfully replace my 9 to 5 income in about 2 months.

Pat: That's fantastic!

Trevor: Yeah. I was really...[laugh] That was a really, really good day for me. Because that's been my goal this entire time.



Pat: Yeah.

Trevor: So that was awesome to actually realize.

Pat: That's really cool. And you mentioned you put your book in the Kindle Select program and gave it away for free. How many copies did you actually give away?

Trevor: Good question. I think it was around 1700 copies that got distributed.

Pat: That's huge. That's--1700 copies--a lot of people probably discovering you for the first time because of that, and that's more people that you can build a relationship with, more people that come to your website, and now it looks like you have other products to sell. You know, your membership site, which we'll get into...but, October.

Trevor: Yeah.

Pat: You quit your job. This is after you launch your eBook. What was going through your head then? That's not an easy decision to make.

Trevor: No. It was a bold move. Like I said, I loved my job, I love the people that I worked for and worked with. But like I said, I was a programmer from birth, but I think I was also an entrepreneur from birth. I had this burning desire to do this myself, to be my own boss type of thing, and to build a business and make myself successful from the hard work that I put into my own business.

And it was a really tough decision but I said to myself "I want to give myself all the chances in the world to be able to fill this sort of passion, this dream of being my own boss," so I felt like--I wanted to give myself no other option than to succeed and then to do this and fulfill my dream, because I've heard in past episodes of your podcast where people lost their job, just like yourself, you get laid off, and you have this sink or swim sort of feeling. I guess it was sort of subconscious, I wanted to force myself into that sink or swim feeling so that I could actually, hopefully, swim.

Pat: Right. And it sounds like you are swimming quite well.

Trevor: Yeah, it's going well. The one little tidbit of information that I'd like to give to the listeners is a big lesson that I learned with respect to the eBook.



After I had joined the Kindle Select program and had given away a bunch of copies of the book, I started hearing from customers in the reviews of the book that it was a little bit glitchy on some of their Kindle devices.

Upon further investigation, the book would actually just crash when you opened it on an actual Kindle reader. It would shut down and no one would be able to read it.

Pat: Oh, that's not good!

Trevor: So it was just this moment of "Oh my--are you kidding me right now?!" Also there were problems with...if anyone had an iPad or another tablet or something like that, and they were viewing the book using the Kindle app, it would--for some reason it would flip back to the first page randomly.

So you can imagine how annoying that would be. You're flipping through and learning and all of the sudden it goes back to the first page and you have to flip flip, flip flip and go back to the first page.

It was just like, all these things were going wrong with the book, so I quickly hired a different developer to fix these problems, and he was just a fantastic guy. He educated me on exactly what the problems were, and took me through all the steps and he fixed it up for me. Now everything's fine, everything's great, so thank God for that, but actually despite all those setbacks, the book actually hit the #1 best seller for the Amazon list for its category just this month.

Pat: Oh, congratulations!

Trevor: That was awesome, yeah. I was very surprised to see that. It was a great feeling when I saw that.

Pat: Probably helped that the book is in the right format now.

Trevor: That's right, exactly, yeah! People will be able to actually read the content.

Pat: Haha! And you're probably getting better reviews!

Trevor: Yes, exactly.



Pat: That's really cool. Now, when did you--before we get into the membership site and close up here. Launching the book on your site, how long did you launch it on your site before you pulled it off for Amazon?

Trevor: It was probably around...I would say 2 months or so, I think it was on my site for before I just put it, yeah, directly into Amazon.

Pat: And so you were selling it to...people who are already on your site, a part of your brand. How did that go?

Trevor: Yeah. It was just...I used [E-junkie](#) to hook that up. And I made a different website, it's [JavaPDF.org](#). That's where people would be able to go to and they could read other people's reviews of the book. There's a little video of myself talking about the book and talking about what's in it and how it's beneficial to read it if you want to be a programmer.

And I have a clickable image where you can click on it and it opens up a table of content so you can flip through the book and see exactly what you're going to be getting yourself into, and then I have the standard big, fancy, shiny "BUY NOW" button that links up with E-junkie.

I mean, sales from there were very decent, and it's tough because it's a smaller platform, you don't get the benefit of the Amazon platform when you do it that way, but you keep 100% of the proceeds, so...that's definitely in stark contrast to Amazon, which sometimes Amazon can take up to 65% of your sales, depending on how you price your book.

Pat: Right. I think whether you decide to do it on your own site, or through Amazon, it sort of depends on what your end goal is. I think if you want to make as much money as possible, maybe in the beginning, in the short term, if you have an audience already it's best to do it on your own, on your own site.

However, if you have other products that you could potentially sell, and you're trying to reach out and get as many people into your brand as possible, it sounds like Amazon is the best way to go. And I know, speaking with other people that the fact that it is on Amazon gives it a little bit more prestige.

Trevor: Yeah.



Pat: There's also the algorithms on Amazon, "people who bought this also bought this" or recommended books or...you know, just being there as a search engine also. That plays into how much people get exposed to your brand.

So I feel that it's a good move for you to put the book on Amazon, get it out there, you know, as much as you can or you feel comfortable with participating in the Kindle Select program, giving it for free, because you have this membership site that you just launched.

Trevor: Right.

Pat: How was it putting that together? Because I actually haven't even put up my own membership site yet. What was that experience like and what have the results been for you?

Trevor: I was talking with a few friends from my past job, and the topic sort of came up of this--there's a need for a website that has videos that taught Java programming. For some reason, there's no real big popular site for Java video tutorials type of site. There's none around. And they were saying "Well, Trevor, you've got this audience already, why don't you pick up a good microphone and buy [Camtasia Studio](#) and start recording some videos?"

So after some thought I said "Hey, why not, right? I've got nothing to lose." So I launched the membership site, I chose [Javavideotutorials.net](#), launched it in about mid-November, and it actually incorporates videos to teach them Java, it includes the assignments that they can actually use to test their skills, the assignments have a built-in grading system, so when they write out their code, the assignment at a click of a button will test the code that they wrote to see if the code is actually behaving like it should behave. So that was a really neat aspect of the assignments that the readers really enjoyed.

And I also built in actual tests into the membership site, so if you--once you finish watching a video, you can take a test to make sure that everything you learned you actually did understand.

Pat: That's great.

Trevor: So that's a good suite that I put together and I actually built the entire first version of that site from scratch in about 4 days using Java. So that was pretty intense!



Pat: You built it in 4 days?

Trevor: I built it in 4 days. That was 4, you know, I don't know if You've ever seen The Social Network, but you know, you picture the programmer locked up in a room with lots of coffee...that was pretty much me for 4 days while I hammered away at getting this thing up and running because I was so excited to get it out there and launched.

Pat: That's great. How's it going for you right now?

Trevor: Not too shabby! November to mid-December, there was obviously not as many sales as I would've liked, because I didn't do a whole lot of marketing with it, I just sort of put a link on my blog, but then I started getting the word out a little better through my mailing list, and trying to spread word of mouth, and I saw, I don't know, a 1000% growth in sales from December to mid-January, so that was fantastic.

Pat: That's great.

Trevor: Yeah, for sure. So... right now it's still small because it's new, but that's my goal. My goal is to kick into gear and get this whole Internet business thing going and get some people on there and learning.

Pat: Yeah dude, that's awesome. I mean, we all have to start out somewhere right, and it sounds like you're just in the beginnings of this really great platform that you've built. And it's really cool to see you in the beginning stages here and immediately seeing success based on the things you've done, and you're following the right path here, I feel, and I can't wait to see what happens. In the future we should do a follow-up podcast or something.

Trevor: Haha, sure!

Pat: But I think, for me, I'm just thinking off the top of my head with this video program that you have, the tutorials that you set up, it just sounds like there's nothing else out there like it. And that is such a huge opportunity for you, especially if you were to hook up with other people that might have an audience interested in this, or potentially get back on Lifehacker and do a deal with them or something, set up an affiliate program or, you a lot of people in the Internet marketing space are good at this.



They create these events around these products and affiliate promotions and launches and stuff, and that can really take things to a whole new level for you. And with the reoccurring income, I'm on the pricing page right now, I see anywhere from \$19.99 a month and \$34.99 a month, it's, you know, the reoccurring income is just amazing.

You get to the point where you have a certain amount of income and you can sort of predict the least amount that you're going to make because you're going to get even more people in that program the next month.

Trevor: Yeah, for sure. Yeah. I'm very excited about it. If you have any listeners right now that have a desire to learn how to program, by all means check out javavideotutorial.net.

Pat: Awesome.

Trevor: I'm sure they'll love it! I've had lots of people tell me, "These are great tutorials, Trevor!" "You're applying all of your great teaching skills in these things." And, you know, just keep them coming. So it's been good feedback from the customers so far, so I'm pretty stoked.

Pat: Awesome. I'm so, too, for you Trevor, and congratulations on everything so far and I can't wait to see what you come up with later.

If you could leave us with maybe 1 or 2 tips before we head out, just for anybody who's just starting out online or anyone who's just kind of a veteran, based on your experience what would you say?

Trevor: Boy. I think my biggest thing, my biggest tip is...I've had plenty of people that have surrounded me with sort of this negativity with respect to me wanting to pursue this course full time. I had people at work, I've had close friends, I've had family members just say things like "You know, everything's going fine for you right now, Trevor. Why would you quit your job? You've got a--" I had a great, high-paying job, everyone at my job loved me, and I had this great career all laid out for me. So they were saying "Why would you give that up?" But I think...

Pat: What was your answer to that, actually?



Trevor: My biggest thing is, if this is something that you feel like you want to do and you need to do, and this is something that makes you happy or even happier than you ever have been, then why wouldn't you pursue it? It just--it didn't make sense to me.

And so what I ended up doing was I just said "You know what, thank you for your input, I will take that under advisement" and just sort of walked away.

I think a big thing for people is to just take the leap. Obviously, you need to make sure that you have some sort of security blanket. I had probably 6-8 months' worth of savings in the bank account before I actually took the leap. But then pull the trigger. Don't hesitate.

I had huge doubts about it, I had huge anxiety problems that actually came up from this thing. I've never had real anxiety before, but I've had these physical sort of symptoms. I had heart palpitations and sweaty palms and all of these things and my body was just screaming at me, so much so that I actually went to the doctor to get it checked out, and he said "You know what, Trevor, this is just anxiety. It's fine. It's not life threatening."

And I think once I heard that, once I heard him say "It's all in your head." I realized, "Well, this is all the negativity that I've been receiving and feeding off of" and I had to just let it all go. And I had to let the chips fall where they may, and if it didn't work, it didn't work, hey, at least I gave it a shot.

I think that's my biggest advice that I could give to anyone is to just take the leap and take the action and I think that it can really work. I was a little bit doubtful, but hey, I'm ready to go now. I'm looking up and up and up and I can't wait to see what the future has in store.

Pat: I love how your doctor said "this is not life threatening." Was he talking about the anxiety or was he talking about jumping into business, you know?

Trevor: Who knows?

Pat: But it's not, and...yeah, man. Thank you Trevor so much for sharing your story and all your tips and failures and everything and just being so honest with us. I'm sure everybody out there feels the same way.



If anyone wanted to check more of you out and just, you know, give us a couple of URLs so we can find out more.

Trevor: Yeah, sure. My central hub of activity is howtoprogramwithjava.com. I actually also purchased howtoprograminjava.com just in case people mess that up, so either one will get you to me. That's my central hub of activity. Just go to the contact form and shoot me a line. If they have any questions about programming, any questions about business and my story and how I went about doing the things that I did to get to where I am today, I'm absolutely more than happy to lend a hand and to, you know, fire some emails back and forth.

Pat: Awesome. And are you on Twitter?

Trevor: I am on Twitter as well. I believe it's @programwithjava is my little Twitter URL feed.

Nice. Hopefully everyone after listening to this, and if you want to thank Trevor for his time, @programwithjava on Twitter. I'll put that in the show notes, smartpassiveincome.com/session55.

Trevor: 55, baby!

Pat: 55. All right, man. Well, thank you so much Trevor, again...it's a pleasure. Thank you.

Trevor: It's a pleasure to me, too. Take care Pat.

Pat: Take care.

All right, thanks again to Trevor for the awesome story and the wisdom to go along with it. Again, you can find him at a couple places: howtoprogramwithjava.com, and javavideotutorials.net, and Trevor actually emailed me right after our interview to go over some specific traffic numbers with you, which he had handy but we didn't touch on, and I think it would be good to get those out there just so we can get a perspective or have something to compare to with his success.

In his first month of going live in July of 2012, he had an amazing 4171 visitors, which...for a first month is just excellent, I mean much better than my first 4months, actually, on smartpassiveincome.com! And again, I think the lesson there is because he



was really smart with what he started off with, it was epic content, and he just did what he could to get that content in front of those who may find it beneficial. You remember he just emailed a bunch of people.

And in August, one of those emails got picked up by Lifehacker, and in August they featured him, and that's when he had 38,000 visitors come to his site. Then the next month after that it went down because it wasn't featured anymore on Lifehacker, although he was still getting traffic from it.

It went down to 14,000, and then 13,000 in October, 11,000 in November, back up to 13,000 in December of 2012, and his website is projected to have about 17,000 in January of 2013, which is when we recorded this session. Again, just great numbers! And I know they are only going to improve, so hopefully that will give you some inspiration, or maybe a kick in the butt to do more than just write content, but to actually go out there and promote it.

To finish up, as always, I just wanted to say thanks, again, for listening. It's always such a pleasure to create these shows for you and I enjoy it so much, and I hope you enjoy being on the listener end of it, too.

I've got a lot of other great interviews lined up for the future! Spencer from nichepursuits.com will be on, and we're also bringing back, by popular demand, Lewis Howes to talk about some amazing affiliate stuff. It's going to be good!

So make sure you subscribe, maybe sure you leave a rating and review on iTunes if you have an extra minute, and make sure you take what you learn here and you implement it. It's not worth listening to unless you're going to do something, right? I want to share your success story here on the podcast, too, and the best way to get my attention is to take this advice, implement it, and share the fantastic results with me just like Trevor did!

I look forward to hearing from you, and as always stay safe, stay healthy, and I'll talk to you next week. Peace.

Announcer: Thanks for listening to the Smart Passive Income Podcast at www.smartpassiveincome.com.

Keoni: Thank you for listening everybody!