

New Technique for Shooting the Videos

written by Holly

August 7, 2009

By Holly Lisle

So after yesterday's debacle with post-production on **THE WRITING CRAFT: How To Motivate Yourself**, I had two choices. I could either go back in and do exactly the same work I did yesterday today. Or I could figure out a different way of producing the work in the first place that wouldn't require three hours of post-production for twenty minutes of video.

I applied some sideways thinking, and reshot the video from scratch this morning. Shooting took around 23 minutes. (I talked a bit more this time). Post production took...about 30 minutes.

And I am uploading Section I right now, so that it will be available TODAY to all Think Sideways grads, and to all current Think Sideways students who are on Lesson 5 or higher. (If you're just starting, you'll get "How To Motivate Yourself" when you reach Lesson 5, and will receive each of the four segments weekly that month, because they do require work on your part, and Month 2 of Think Sideways is not exactly a cakewalk.

The section of the course available today will have the handouts, and a watchable version of the course (the student theater version). It won't include the transcript (I hire someone else to do that, and still have to get the mp3 to her), and it won't include the downloadable video (I still have to do a reformat of that smaller than 85 MB that will still be readable at full screen on your computer. Breaking the section up into multiple downloads is first on my list.)

But my new process should VASTLY increase the speed with which I can put the rest of the thing together without decreasing the quality.

And the whole thing will still be available in the shop either the end of this month or the beginning of next, once I get it all packaged nicely.

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I HATE computers

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

I just lost three hours of editing on Section 1 of THE WRITING CRAFT: How To Motivate Yourself.

Application crashed. All gone. I still have the original recording. Now I get to do all the video cutting and resizing and retaping of stuff that I messed up the first time AGAIN.

Argh.

(NOTE: This is not the most current "Write a book with me" post. This is me being grumpy. The most current Write A Book With Me post will be the top post linked here.)

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Think Sideways Is Up and Running

written by Holly

August 7, 2009

By Holly Lisle

I'm posting this a lot of places, because there's one issue that I hadn't counted on when shutting down the course so we could do upgrades.

The new version requires members to check a box to receive critical e-mail updates (which is good, and will make my site host much happier)—BUT NO ONE has clicked the box, because the default is OFF, and we just installed the software.

So every student, grad student, and prospective student who needed to know that the course was back up and running just got cut out of the loop.

Pass this on for me if you would, please.

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A Tale Of Two ISPs, (or... As You Don't Like It Very Much)

written by Holly

August 7, 2009

By Holly Lisle

Short version... we moved.

That might be enough information right there to explain my extended absence, the dead weblog, the missing newsletter, my MIA status on the Think Sideways boards.

Long version...

... we had an opportunity to get back to a place we missed, to our family, to our **people**, and the window on that opportunity was already closing when we discovered it, so within four hours of my husband finding it, I was on the phone hooking things up to make it happen.

No, we hadn't actually been *planning to move*... but we'd started thinking about it.

One week later, everything that could be signed WAS signed and we had gotten rid of 66% of everything we owned, because we were going to a place that was half the space for twice the price, and we had too much stuff for the house we were in. We still have a house to either sell or rent, and we still have to go back and take care of that, but we needed to move fast, and Matt and I have proven to be adept at making opportunities happen.

So about three days after we signed all the rental stuff, on Thursday, March 5th we boxed, packed, and moved ourselves (acquiring an astonishing variety of bruises and scars in the process), and drove for close to nine hours on one tank of gas each (he drove the moving truck, which had a really big tank, and I drafted the truck, and got 43.5 mpg out of a three-year-old Chevy Cobalt, thank you very much, and we did it without stopping for so much as a bathroom break. I had three sips of water on the way, and the kid and I sang 100 Bottles of Beer on the wall at one point to stay awake and alert.

We didn't even let anyone but my daughter and son in the Air

Force know we were moving until we'd already done it—and then we let know the day before we moved. It was a big surprise to my husband's folks when he called them from here. ☐

In THEORY, everything was ready to go when we got here. Electric and water were on—we'd transferred them the day we got the okay from the rental place. I'd transferred phone service, had an appointment for Internet to be hooked up the Tuesday after our arrival on Friday, and we were bringing our Dish box so we could watch hockey.

Friday, March 6th, my daughter and her husband came over, and the truck that had taken us three days to load took two hours to unload. We spent Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, getting started on the boxes, and by Monday, there were recognizable spaces in the house, though my office was Extra Box Central.

And the electric and water were spiffy.

Internet? Not so much.

AT&T sent out a guy on Tuesday, March 10th, to hook us up to phone service, and when he didn't mention our online service, we asked about our DSL.

DSL? He didn't have a work order for that.

After some calling around, he and we managed to get him a work order. But at the same time, he discovered that the phone line to the house had been cut, so he came back the next day and dug us in a new one. And he hooked us up for Internet. Our modem would be arriving by UPS on Thursday 12th, we were told—sorry about the confusion.

Thursday, no modem. We called customer service. Oops, it was still en route. We'd have it Friday by five.

Friday? No modem.

Matt sat on the phone with the the United Nations of AT&T for

over an hour, discovering that while AT&T customer service had us in their system, AT&T tech support had no record of our existence, no record of a modem being needed (or sent), no sign that we were in any way due for anything except being put on hold a lot, which they did a SPECTACULAR job of doing, by the way, while frequently sending Matt back to customer service, who sent him back to tech support...

Wearied of the AT&T run-around, he called Comcast, and set us up for an appointment. The earliest they could have someone out was Tuesday the 17th.

I did what non-secure business-critical online things I could to keep in the loop on HollyShop and Think Sideways (while Margaret and Craig kept things actually running) while parked in a chair at Books-A-Million (YAY! Millionaire's Club... free hot-spot internet!), but what I dared to do was very limited. I don't know what sort of security they have, and I didn't feel like taking any chances to find out.

Tuesday 17th dawned, and the Comcast guy showed up right on time. Awesome.

Starting working with our wiring.

Only there was a problem with the cable.

Long pause on our end.

The cable into the house had been cut by the same sidewalk repair doofus who'd also cut the phone line. They were going to have to send out a guy to dig in a new line.

He came on Friday 20th, at about 7 pm, worked for three hours, and mostly had the line dug in, but not buried. He'd be back on Saturday, he said, and we'd also have the cable modem guy back on Saturday, and **he'd** hook us up.

Saturday it rained like a bastard all friggin' day. Nobody came. Nobody **could** come. Weren't nobody going to do nothing in

THAT weather.

People get finicky about working with wires and electricity while standing ankle-deep in water beneath a sky that's opened up on top of them like God's Saint Bernard when he stops holding it in...

Go figure.

MEANWHILE, we were still calling on and waiting for our modem from AT&T (Yes, we were keeping all our options open. Are you kidding? You see how well this is all going?)

In THEORY, our DSL modem from AT&T was being overnighted to us, and would arrive on Monday, March 23rd.

And in fact, it showed up at around noon. Guess what the UPS guy said.

"Gee, I sure hope they sent you the right one. They almost always send the wrong one out to this area."

With a heart heavy as lead, Matt set up the modem.

It didn't work.

But that was okay, because Comcast had the modem guy coming out between 11-2 to hook us up.

Nevertheless, Matt called tech support. At least this time they'd heard of us. They informed him that the line wasn't supposed to be provisioned until 6 pm that night because it was a new order, and that we'd have to wait until then to try it. Matt nicely let the tech guy know that the order had been in since March 3rd. A bit nonplussed, the tech guy said just to wait until 6 pm to try it, and if it didn't work then, they'd troubleshoot it.

The Comcast line guy came out and buried the rest of the line. The Comcast modem guy missed his 11-2 appointment, and we

called, and they had no record of the appointment, even though I'd called earlier to confirm it, and they'd had a record of it then.

They set up a new appointment. Today. Tuesday March 24th. 11-2.

Deeply unhappy, we decided that we were probably never going to get working Internet.

And then an astoundingly perky-sounding AT&T guy called and said he was outside manually reprovisioning our wire (an unscheduled house-call—holy crapnoids, Batman), and would I please check to make sure the modem was plugged in correctly.

I did, and it was, and not too many minutes later, the thing lit up like Christmas. The AT&T guy cheered. (Honest to God, he cheered. I've never seen a phone guy get too excited about anything, so this is worth noting.) I cheered. I called Matt on the cellphone and HE cheered.

He was out getting stuff for dinner because Becky and her husband Tony were dropping by for dinner, but when he got home, he did the whole advanced router set-up thing to secure our system.

And this time, finally, it worked.

Online at last.

No more Books-A-Million hot spot. No more total media blackout.

The Comcast guy is coming today. Well, that's the theory, anyway. Yes, we're going to have him set up the cable modem, too. We're going to test both services for at least a month, and then we're going to choose one.

After which, the one we didn't choose will no doubt prove to have been the superior service. That seems to be the way this

has been going.

Meanwhile, the Rangers have turned into a team that has apparently heard of hockey, have fired the abysmal Renney and hired the promising Tortorella, have gotten Avery back (their stupidest recent mistake, aside from hanging on to Renney and Pern **way** past their expiration dates, was letting him go in the first place)... and we haven't seen a single game of their turn-around.

After the AT&T and Comcast debacles, we're too afraid to call Dish.

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Scrivener by Another Scrivener Lover

written by Holly
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By Holly Lisle

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The Sad Truth of Voter Fraud

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

Someone discovered that the IP logging that was supposed to work on the poll I set up wasn't working any better than the vote tallies at the bottom, and sat running up the numbers on the courses he or she wanted.

I was watching the tallies pretty carefully, and while the numbers changed, the percentages didn't. And then all of a sudden, several courses pulled massively ahead, and, miracle of miracles, about 70 more votes were cast than had people actually visiting that page.

In EACH of the two surveys.

And again, suddenly out of nowhere, the constant frontrunners in each of the two surveys had fallen far behind leaders that had added about ... wait for it ... about seventy or so new clicks behind the miracle come-from-behind leaders.

So the survey is closed. I'll go with the numbers I posted yesterday for now, while I consider the fact that it was important for me to hear from each of you. And I still want to. And how I wish I could kick the someone who decided that his or her vote should drown out the voices of everyone else off the site.

Got a couple of important truths from this. One, go with a paid service for doing polls and whatnot from now on.

Two, don't try to get along with buggy software, ever.

Three, not everyone who hangs out on my site is one of the good guys. Something I forget, and shouldn't..

Stuck

written by Holly
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By Holly Lisle

I hit a wall yesterday on THE SILVER DOOR. I'm in the process of getting unstuck.

You can watch me getting unstuck (using Inspiration) here:
<http://onemorewordbooks.com>

My site was cracked this morning

written by Holly
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The affiliate program, **iDevAffiliate**, one of the worst-supported pieces of software in human history, was cracked, and a phishing scam was inserted into a hidden file that directed people to what appeared to be a Skype website.

I deleted the phishing scam, but because **iDevAffiliate** does not support their software, I also deleted the affiliate program, in order to protect people's information and to prevent any sort of recurrence. The **iDevAffiliate** program will not be back in any form. **If you are or were an affiliate, please delete your links.**

I don't know at this point if there will be any sort of affiliate program in the future. I've let a lot of people down, and I'm not sure how to fix that, and I'm not sure how to prevent something like it from happening in the future.

I'd like to add that Jorge Catena, owner of Downtownhost.com, immediately responded to my SOS and within about two minutes had deleted the phishing folder. The problem came not from the host, but from very bad software.

ADDED LATER:

Jorge Catena recommended JRox.com Affiliate software, and JRox looks like it could integrate user data from the iDevAffiliate database. It doesn't look like it will integrate commissions. It does look very well supported, which would make it much less likely to be hacked.

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Cool Tech

written by Holly
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By Holly Lisle

http://www.hothardware.com/Articles/Hands_on_with_the_ASUS_Ee

e/

A couple of times on your site, you've mentioned the usefulness of things like the BlackBerry. Being able to write your ideas down wherever you are, whenever you get them. I stumbled upon this little gizmo on some forum, can't recall which, but it seems to do a hell of a lot better than the BlackBerry—it's an actual laptop, so far as I can gather. It's not a "media-rich" system, but it does the two most important things writers need: Internet and OpenOffice. It'll cost around two hundred dollars, and that's one helluva deal given AlphaSmart's low-end word processor costs fifty dollars more and comes with not even half as much functionality. Admittedly, a three-hour on-the-go charge is no fun, but it's a fair exchange given how much stuff you get to run with it.

The article mentions that it may hit mid-August. Cool tech anyhow.

Thanks to Paul A, who sent this to me.

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Literature Map

written by Holly
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By Holly Lisle

Had never seen the literature map before. I thought it was pretty cool.

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