

The Five W's

Monday, 14 January 2008

I just might have the best job in the world. At the very least, it must fall in the top 10. By some definitions, I'm considered a technology journalist, but that's far too serious a title. At work, I'm considered a Technical Analyst, which is even more corporate considering what I do every day. For over seven years I've played with the latest and greatest tech gadgets that my money could never afford to buy. Then I stand on my soapbox on television or the Web and talk about why it's so great or not. I'm on 500 products or so and counting.

I started in the industry with TechTV right about the time it changed from ZDTV. That was years before Comcast bought the company and merged it with G4 Media. Back then I wrote for the Web and did regular television appearances on Call for Help, The Screen Savers, TechLive, and Fresh Gear. And twice I worked on Digital Digs, the yearly \$100,000 technology giveaway. Never in my wildest dreams had I ever imagined being on television. The first time, I latched onto the table and didn't let go for three minutes. My mouth was dry and my heart pounded.

I had quite a run with TechTV. I've done dozens of radio interviews across the country during the holidays as a gadget expert, whatever that means. I've been quoted in the National Inquirer for a story about batteries, did an interview with KRON4 in San Francisco about voice over IP, tested notebooks for BusinessWeek, and even got a blind quote in the San Diego Tribune while I grilled a CEO about fair use. There are even a pile of stories picked up by ABC News Online. Somehow, I even managed to get published in Leo Laporte's 2003 Technology Almanac and Leo Laporte's 2004 Technology Almanac.

At G4 Media, I continued to write product reviews for the Web, then moved on to work specifically for a daily live show called Attack of the Show. Most of my time was spent behind the scenes trying out new products, then the hosts took it from there. My soapbox was a weekly appearance on Filter for a segment called 'Tech Toss Up' where I compared two products head-to-head.

After G4, I created and produced my own gadget show called InDigital: Your Life In Gear. It's available for free online at Revision3. It was tough work trying to produce a 30-minute show with a limited budget and crew, but overall it was an amazing experience. At the end of September 2007, more than a year and a half after creating the show, I decided to put it on the shelf for lots of different reasons.

I've kept my foot in television since the TechTV days. Every now and again I do gadget segments for Fuel TV's The Daily Habit and lately I've done a few things for CW Now. Every now and again there are random interviews like Starz Edge. I'll have to post some of the segments one of these days.

What a wild ride it has been. How did I get into the industry? My career path is sorted at best. I have an Engineering degree from the University of Waterloo in Canada. In 1998, I leveraged the degree and some special computer skills to get a one year contract on a Year 2000 project in San Francisco. When that ended, I fell into high tech Public Relations. Instead of the usual press release writing, I landed in a group that specialized in Product Reviews, which led to critiquing products before they hit the market. Eventually (thanks to some inside contacts), I landed my job at TechTV. If anything, my story stresses the importance of education. I wouldn't be here without it.