

Truth Files: Update #5

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Previous Truth Files Updates:

These reports were started in April of 2010 so there are a few now. Some were written as PDF reports, others just posted on my blog, but here they are in case you'd like to start at the beginning:

[Truth Files #1](#)

<http://www.inlineseo.com/blog/2010/04/23/truth-files-pulling-back-the-curtain-on-autopilot-income/>

[Truth Files #2](#)

<http://www.inlineseo.com/blog/2010/08/10/truth-files-update-2-autopilot-income-content-publishing-as-it-was-meant-to-be/>

[Truth Files #3](#)

<http://www.inlineseo.com/blog/2010/10/03/truth-files-3-%e2%80%93-its-now-a-5-figure-network/>

[Truth Files #4](#)

<http://www.inlineseo.com/blog/2011/01/18/truth-files-4-hitting-my-ceiling/>

Feel free to pass this report around if you know someone who might be interested.
Thanks!

Lisa

I hope things are going well for you.

I haven't written in a while and expect I'll take a break for a little while this summer so I just wanted to put something together for you.

I wanted to make it something really helpful so this is pretty long and it took me a while.

I hope you find it inspiring and valuable if you're building content sites like me (or thinking about getting into it).

So let's go ahead and get into it...

I'm going to show you a table that charts my earnings from the network of sites I started building in November of 2009 here in a minute and I'll refer back to it throughout this report.

The whole point of me writing these Truth Files (there are several more on my InlineSEO.com blog that you may want to look at) was to show how this business really works.

First, what is this business?

I've never really seen a good name for it.

Some people call it building virtual real estate.

But that never really seemed to catch on.

I remember that term being applied something like 5 years ago and even now you just don't see it being used often.

I've settled on calling it content publishing, but hey, if you've got a better name for making money from a website through ads then I'm all ears.

Anyway, part of the reason why I put these reports and blog posts together was because I'm pretty disgusted with the make money online market.

Not that I'm perfect, but I do like to share and really do have some good intentions here of trying to pull back the curtain and expose this business model with all its flaws and potential.

I've also learned a lot from the people who've connected with me and shared their success stories since putting these updates out.

And that's been great.

I can't stand all the 'buy my course and learn how I went from broke to \$10,000 a month all while relaxing on the beach'.

It is possible to set up autopilot income where maybe you can do that eventually, but it takes some serious W-O-R-K to get there and I think if more people just realized that they'd be willing to put in more effort and we'd have even more success stories.

So I'm not sure why most everyone selling things in the make money online industry tries so hard to hide that fact.

Anyway, back in November of 2009 I built some sites and I started writing these reports and updates a couple months later.

The sites are all content sites that earn money from Adsense and CPA offers.

You can do the same thing with affiliate offers, etc ... it just depends on what markets you get into.

Obviously you'd want to monetize your sites with offers that are related to the content you've got on it. You also want to put ads on it that will payout a decent amount (for example, not all markets pay out very well at all with Adsense).

Anyway, so that's a short background of what I'm doing.

So here's the table with the income statistics (if you need to see screenshots they're all over at my blog):

		<u>Adsense</u>	<u>CPA</u>	<u>Total</u>
November	-	\$0	\$0	\$0
December	-	\$82.44	\$0	\$82.44
 <u>2010</u>				
January	-	\$334.20	\$0	\$334.20
February	-	\$473.12	\$26.65	\$499.77
March	-	\$818.38	\$167.87	\$986.25
April	-	\$1,196.77	\$814.15	\$2,010.92

May	-	\$2,715.66	\$1,430.50	\$4,331.16
June	-	\$2,258.39	\$2,525.28	\$4,783.67
July	-	\$3,275.59	\$3,142.88	\$6,418.47
August	-	\$4,756.68	\$5,670.15	\$10,426.83
September	-	\$4,395.73	\$5,334.43	\$9730.16
October	-	\$4,235.51	\$4,048.30	\$8,283.81
November	-	\$5,033.08	\$4,773.38	\$9,806.46
December	-	\$4,949.60	\$5,274.18	\$10,223.78

2011

Jan	-	\$9,580.39	\$5,692.48	\$15,272.87
Feb	-	\$7,408.70	\$4,673.92	\$12,082.62
March	-	\$9,842.04	\$3,873.93	\$13,715.97
April	-	\$9,818.06	\$3,089.58	\$12,907.64
May	-	\$10,561.28	\$4480.12	\$15,041.40

As you can see, the project started in November of 2009 and I made zero dollars that month.

I barely had time to get a little content written for each of the sites, configure all the domains, set up ugly webpages and do a little promoting.

I started about 20 sites that month and if I were to do it all again, I would not have built so many at once because I did not have the time or money to develop them all.

These were not the first sites I had built, I've been doing this for a very long time. So I guess I thought that I could handle that many sites all at once, but it really wasn't the right approach.

Anyway, by the end of November, each site had 3 feature articles plus a home page and the regular legal pages.

At this point, about 18 months later they all have at minimum 30 pages and many well over 100. They've each had tons of articles submitted to article directories as well as many other methods for getting links (bookmarking, RSS feed submission, press releases, free and paid directories, contacting webmasters, etc...).

Here's a few things I want to point out about the chart.

As you can see, it took from Nov thru April (5 months) for me to get this network up to the 4-figure mark.

		<u>Adsense</u>	<u>CPA</u>	<u>Total</u>
November	-	\$0	\$0	\$0
December	-	\$82.44	\$0	\$82.44
 <u>2010</u>				
January	-	\$334.20	\$0	\$334.20
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March	-	\$818.38	\$167.87	\$986.25
April	-	\$1,196.77	\$814.15	\$2,010.92

So that's definitely not an overnight success by any stretch of the imagination.

But once it got to that point it never slipped back down, which has been great.

It took from Nov to August, (9 months) to get this network up to the 5-figure mark.

	<u>Adsense</u>	<u>CPA</u>	<u>Total</u>
November -	\$0	\$0	\$0
December -	\$82.44	\$0	\$82.44
 <u>2010</u>			
January -	\$334.20	\$0	\$334.20
February -	\$473.12	\$26.65	\$499.77
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June -	\$2,258.39	\$2,525.28	\$4,783.67
July -	\$3,275.59	\$3,142.88	\$6,418.47
August -	\$4,756.68	\$5,670.15	\$10,426.83

9 months is a lot of time and I can tell you it took a lot of work to get to this point. And as you'll notice, it barely scraped over the 5-figure mark and even then it dipped back down (not too far, but under 5-figures a month for sure) during the months leading up to the holidays.

I'm going to infer that August is a better than average month in my industry/market. I actually have other sites in this industry that I built in 2008 and from trending it all out, that seems to be true. It's probably the same in many other industries because August is kind of the end of summer and "play-time" for most people.

The chart goes up and down, but I'd say it's been pretty stable earnings. In my opinion, when you build things the right way, you're going to get a stable income even if you take a break from doing anything.

The income kept growing because I reinvested money back into it. I bought content and outsourced more and more link building.

But I'm certain if I had not added money to it and stopped at any point, I'd have experienced a plateau or maybe even very slight growth over time.

You won't get the sharper increases without re-investing time or money, but it will be pretty stable if you've set things up the right way.

And by "the right way" I mean trying to add value for the people who come to your sites.

I make a conscience effort to hire good writers and although I can't read and edit everything they give me, I do pay a decent amount for my articles and I really try to screen my writers as best I can.

I also don't spam forums and blogs for links, so that helps too. I diversify my links and try to get those that are considered more legitimate (at least by most of the SEO community).

Anyway, I just added up my income from 2010 from this network of sites and I'm seeing that I earned a total of \$67,835.48.

So it's a decent amount of money for a new side-business. People definitely make more and sometimes much faster, but I think it's pretty good all things considered.

I get a lot of questions from people wondering how much I spent to get this and it's a great question. Although this is all generated from free traffic, I don't write any of my content or build too many of the links on my own.

I outsource it.

So I'm spending money on this for sure.

I can tell you that in 2010 I re-invested about \$15,000 of the earnings back into the project. I started with about \$3,000 going in. So the total cost for this was about \$18,000, but obviously, that was spread out over time and the only up-front cost was the initial \$3,000.

So I'm still coming out ahead and as you'll see, the income keeps growing in 2011.

I want to be completely honest with you and point out that these numbers are just estimates. I run about 3 different business within one company so I don't separate out my accounting and can't really get you proof with screenshots of exactly what I've spent, but I'd say my estimates above are pretty close.

Could you do this without outsourcing?

I'm going to say yes you can, definitely.

I know that for a fact because several years ago I was not in the position to outsource, I guess I could have afforded to do it, but was intimidated by the idea so I built sites all on my own.

I wrote all the content and built all the links for a couple of sites and was able to get one Adsense site to as high as \$2,000 a month and an affiliate site to an average of \$2,500 a month. This took me a year or maybe a little longer to reach, but I did do it without outsourcing.

So please don't be discouraged if you hear how I started my network with \$3,000 and you don't have money to start out with. The great thing about this business is you really don't need much money at all. If you have enough for a domain name and cheap hosting you can get started.

Just do what I did when I began.

Write your own content and build your own links.

Once you're earning from your first site you can ramp things up by outsourcing if you want or keep doing it all on your own. I've met a few other people who are really successful in this business model and that's exactly how they did it too. So it's very common to start out with nearly no budget.

Anyway, to keep going with this network of sites, this year, 2011, started off great. I made over \$15,000 just during the first month. If you look at the chart it took me 14 months to get to that point.

		<u>Adsense</u>	<u>CPA</u>	<u>Total</u>
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Jan	-	\$9,580.39	\$5,692.48	\$15,272.87
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April	-	\$9,818.06	\$3,089.58	\$12,907.64
May	-	\$10,561.28	\$4480.12	\$15,041.40

But then as you notice it dipped back down.

The earnings were still way above \$10,000 a month, but not at \$15,000. From looking at trends, January is another high month in this industry. The holidays are over so it makes sense that this would be true in most non-seasonal industries.

So although my market is not seasonal, there are trends and I'm thinking they probably are similar in many other markets because a lot of people get sidetracked with things around the holidays (accounting for the dip there) and in the summer months.

So anyway, it's a steady income, but you've got to expect some ups and downs just like anything else. But as you can see, a person could adjust for these dips and definitely still count on a certain amount of money every month.

By May, which should not be that great of a month from my trending data you can see I got back up to over \$15,000. This was mostly because I did outsource a little more content and link building between Jan and May.

So if you want to keep growing you've got to keep investing back into your sites. I guess I could have stopped at any point, but why?

I'm not planning on stopping even now so we'll see how far I can get.

Here's a few important things I want to say about creating these sites and getting them to a pretty solid earnings level.

First of all, this was hard work.

Anyone who tells you otherwise is flat out lying in a big way.

It's not like I had to dig trenches in 90 degree weather and do anything back breaking, but even though I am fortunate enough to be able to outsource most things, managing all the outsourcers and planning all this took a lot of effort.

I can't say I spent 1 hour a week on this.

Most weeks it was probably about 15 to 20 hours.

Another thing is anyone who tells you their earnings are \$500 per day or whatever is well, kind of doing things in a strange way.

I cannot chart by day.

The earnings are all over the place.

Weekends are definitely lower as a trend, but even the much higher earning weekdays fluctuate wildly.

So monthly earnings are really the only thing that really make much sense. And as you can see, even those do fluctuate around a little.

I can tell you I've had days where I made slightly over \$1,000 in one day (which was very exciting) and then just a few days later it goes way down to maybe \$300.

Most days are pretty consistent, but it would make no sense at all for me to talk about my earnings per day.

There's just too much variation.

From what I've heard from the high earners I've met (people earning a lot more than me) it's like this in most every market.

I've started doing a better job charting things and planning which has helped a lot. I can't show you those charts because I've charted all my income from my content publishing business, not just this network started in Nov 2009. But when I look at it the growth is zig zagged quite a bit. The overall trend is that it's going up, but it goes up one month, then back down a little, then back up even further.

And it's moving pretty slowly, much slower than I'd like.

So it's frustrating.

But, from the little bit of business statistics I've gained over the years, this means there's real growth. So although it drives me nuts, if it's a good thing I'll take it.

Plus, when I add up what I made from Jan thru May of 2011 I'm already at \$69,020.5.

I never added it up like this until I started writing this report, but I'm glad I did. Honestly I wasn't real excited to share my recent earnings at first because I didn't feel like anything impressive had happened.

But after spending some time looking at the charts, I can see that in the first 5 months of 2011 I've earned more from these sites than I did from all of 2010. So although when looking at my monthly earnings sometimes I don't feel like I'm making any progress, I definitely am!

Again, I've re-invested some of the earnings back into the project. But I'd say it's actually less than from 2010.

Part of that is because I've started building more sites ... I guess I can't help it.

So I might say I've put at most \$10,000 back into this network of sites this year and I've made almost \$70,000 so far so that's a pretty good return.

I've also gone ahead and figured out what my total earnings this year would be if I stay about where I am now. I took the total from Jan thru May and divided it by 5 months ($\$69,020.50/5 = \$13,804$). Then I took that monthly average and projected that I'll earn that much for each month in 2011.

So \$13,804 x 12 and that comes out to be: \$165,649.20.

Wow!

Anyway though that's just a projection.

If something bad happens obviously it won't be this high, but I don't expect it will.

If anything I'm hoping to keep going up at least a little for the rest of the year with this network.

So it could potentially be more.

Either way \$165,000 is great money for something that I could walk away from and keep earning residual income from. Again, I don't have that money yet, it's only May, so this is only a projection.

But, if I ever wanted to cash out I should in theory be able to sell this group of sites for at least one year's revenue.

That would be a lump sum of about \$165,000 and possibly much more.

I'm going to keep them and keep growing this, but it's a nice feeling knowing you built something worth 6-figures.

I wish that for all of you reading this and really don't see any reason why you couldn't do it too.

Anyway, here's a breakdown by year (which makes things look even more interesting):

2010	Jan - May Earnings	\$8,162.30
2010	Actual Yearly Earnings	\$67,835.48
2011	Jan - May Earnings	\$69,020.5
2011	Projected Yearly Earnings	\$165,649.20

So as you can see I really am increasing my earnings substantially even though it doesn't always increase from month to month. And I'm not having to re-invest every cent I'm making to do it.

In fact, if I could find a way to do that, I probably would, but ... and I realize this sounds crazy, but I can't spend the money fast enough to grow as fast as I'd like.

I have taken some of my earnings with this and started up new sites, some even in different markets with completely different modes of income so I've spread things around a little.

But even with that and investing some of the money back into sites I built way before I started this November network, I'm still nowhere near spending all the money -- which is good because I do need to pay myself and eat and stuff.

With regards to spending the money, it's hard to manage all the writers and link builders.

It's also a little scary for me to spend money like crazy. I do some and then see what happens, then do more. So I'm slowing myself down, it's almost like I can't just let it go and see what happens.

If I could somehow scale that up I'd be able to grow faster, but I'm also happy with where I'm at.

I still managed to increase my earnings by more than double in a year so that's pretty good.

One thing that really does bother me and maybe some of you reading this are better at statistics and business growth than I am, but if you notice, I was practically doubling my earnings every month during the early stages, but then have been barely able to increase things later on.

For example, in 2010, during Feb I went from about \$500 a month up to \$1000 a month the next month. Then the following month (April) it shot up to \$2,000 and then even \$4,000 after that.

I never saw anything near a doubling after that.

I'm thinking the answer is because I was able to double my assets during those early stages. What I mean by assets are my content (so the pages on my sites) and the links I have coming to my sites.

If you start out with 3 page sites and get them all to 20 pages a few months later (which is what I did) then you've way more than doubled your content assets. If you start out with maybe 50 indexed links and then move up to 500 indexed links a few months later then again you've more than doubled your assets (you've gone up 10x which is huge).

I guess that could account for some serious growth ... like the doubling I saw during those early months.

Once you get up to a certain point though, you can't double or triple your assets very easily so the income doesn't move up as fast. It's like the difference between a small sports car and a truck hauling a 3 ton water tank ... it takes more to get that water tanker rolling up to 40 mph where the sports car can get there with almost no effort.

But hey, if anyone has any other ideas I'd love to hear them. If there were a manageable way to keep increasing the income faster than what I'm doing believe me I'm open to suggestions :)

So what do I hope you take away from this?

First, I'm showing you everything all the way through month 1 to about 18 months later. Although I love this business model and really believe in it, it's not going to get you to financial freedom overnight.

However, believe it or not, it is pretty close to autopilot once you get it set up.

I've been involved in other types of business models like infopublishing and creating training programs and really can't say those were anywhere near to autopilot like this.

I think I could leave this network of sites and not do anything to them and 6 months to a year later probably still see the same income from them. It may be a little higher or lower, but where else can you get anywhere close to that?

One of the reasons I'm so confident in this is that my first successful sites still hold their rankings and bring in the same amount of traffic.

This has been over the course of 10 YEARS!!!

Some years I've done nothing to maintain these rankings and other years I've put in a little work (maybe outsourced a few articles for article marketing or gotten a little content written). These first sites were built to promote my products, but using the same principles I used for these ad sites.

The first affiliate and adsense sites I built also still bring in decent amounts of money. Again, most years I haven't done anything to them and they still hold their rankings and

bring in good income. I think if I just left them for a couple of years I'd eventually start to slip in traffic and earnings, but really, that's a long time of doing nothing and still getting paid.

So it's true, eventually, if you really do nothing to your sites, they'll start to slip somewhat. It just kind of depends on what you did as to how much they'll slip and how fast.

Just in the almost 18 months since I built these sites there's been several Google updates and I really haven't seen too much impact.

Did maybe my traffic drop a little during them?

Maybe.

It's hard to measure for certain what with the trends I see throughout the year. Traffic and income goes up and down a little.

I had a lot of sites that were completely unaffected by the Google updates, some even increased in traffic, so I'm attributing the dips in income to trends and not rankings. I also checked my main keywords and was still in the #1 spot for them after the algorithm changes so I really don't think I suffered much if any at all.

So for the most part, I'd say you can build a stable income off high search engine rankings.

Of course it's better to diversify where your traffic is coming from, but too many people worry about this right up front.

I mean really, if you're currently not earning anything or maybe you're earning a small amount like \$200 a month why on earth would you worry about this?

You're at the point where you have nothing to lose.

Too many people freak out about how if they choose a particular business model and start bringing in good money they're going to lose all the money they were making.

So then they don't get started.

If I hadn't gotten started with this, I'd have a lot less money and less experience building a business so no matter what happens it's been a positive experience.

At the point I'm at now though I'd be crazy not to start diversifying my traffic and I've started working on that for this network of sites and others that I've built.

Newsletters, social media, and video are a few of the things I'm working on.

But for the most part this network is still running 80-90% from SEO. At this point I've got to change that and am taking the right steps (even though I'm kind of slow about it).

But I do think the earnings chart from this network shows SEO is fairly stable. You'd see at least this much fluctuation if you used PPC (I used to be pretty good at it so I know this is true), probably with social media marketing, or any other traffic generation technique.

Nothing's 100% stable, but again, don't let that stop you from getting started.

And lastly, I'd like you to take away from this that you can earn good money from AdSense or affiliate/CPA offers. Anyone who tells you the only way to earn decent money online is to offer a product or service is all wrong.

I thought I'd bring this up because I see so many people spreading advice that you've got to create your own product to be a success.

But you actually can make a decent amount of money giving away free content and monetizing it with ads.

In fact, as someone who's done both, this content publishing business model has a lot of benefits to it. For starters there's pretty much no customer support required and that's big. Time always factors into your earnings and if you can invest all your time into growing your business then that's a big deal.

I haven't seen major income jumps (I'll admit it), but I really never saw that even when I focused more on creating and marketing products.

I've been able to meet a few people who are building content publishing business that make much more money than what I'm showing you here. Some of them are very near to 6-figures a month and none of that comes from creating products or services. It's all from ads on sites offering free content.

So there's a lot of potential with this business model. Another main reason I like it is because I don't have to sell anything to anyone, it just kind of all happens on its own.

There's no hype involved.

I feel pretty good offering free, valuable content to people to help them solve problems or answers their questions.

I try to place relevant ads on my pages and some people take advantage of them, others don't. It's a very low pressure way to earn money and depending on what markets you get into can be very rewarding.

So anyway, if you've followed me all along then I hope you've gotten something out of these Truth Reports. I hope they've at least inspired you to get started, it really is never too late!

And thank-you for allowing me to write them (and even encouraging me at times). It's been a great learning experience for me as well.

All the best...

Sincerely,

Lisa Parmley

InlineSEO.com