

## On Podcasting: It's just a hobby, right?

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Last night, as I was obsessing over my podcasting stats with my wife (just a bit), she asked the usual question.

"Are you having fun?"

Of course, I answered yes, otherwise I wouldn't continue creating podcasts.

"Then why are you so worried about your stats? It isn't like it's a business."

This is a common dichotomy I hear often when discussing podcasting and other ventures that are more hobby than work. People seem incapable of finding a middle ground, If something is a "hobby" then you shouldn't worry about it all. The entire process should be fun, fun, fun. If, on the other hand, something is work, you shouldn't have any fun at all. At best, this is an outdated concept. At worse, it is damaging to you and those around you.

There is one major reason why you might stress a bit over something that others would classify as a pure hobby. No matter what I do, I want to do my best AND I want it to have as large an effect as possible. I want the maximum number of people to listen to my podcast and read my columns. I want to share my knowledge and help make the world a (slightly) better place.

Therefore, when my stats are down I do stress a bit. Is there a technical problem preventing people from accessing my podcast? Is my content lacking? Did I offend someone -- although some writers consider that if you aren't offending someone, you aren't doing your job. What are the stats trying to tell me? What can I learn from this?

Additionally, podcasting stats are simply one way of "keeping score." When you play pickup basketball, you keep score. When you play fantasy baseball, you keep score. You want to know how you measure up against those around you. While you should always seek to develop a good sense of self-worth, it is simply human nature to compare yourself and your work -- and your hobby -- against others.

Finally, work should be fun, too. I like to believe that if I ever develop podcasting into a full-time job, I would still have fun doing it. Otherwise, why bother? This is true of any job. If you aren't having fun in your job, you aren't doing your best work. You are merely slogging through each day simply so you can get your paycheck at the end of the week and retire at the end of the job. How dreary is that?

So, I'm hoping this proves it's OK to be concerned with your "hobby." You should care about the work you do, whether you are being paid for it directly or indirectly.