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“Valley” News: Matthew Panzarino

by Conlan Spangler



The San Joaquin Valley is home, but the center of the technology world is about 150 miles west-northwest in Silicon Valley (although this is **less true** every day as the web continues to make the world smaller and **location inconsequential**). Matthew Panzarino covers the news of the *other* valley from right here in Fresno. He’s a news and Apple editor for **The Next Web**, one of the top online publications with more than 5 million monthly visitors.

Matthew was born and raised in Fresno, where he attended Edison High School.

“In 2009,” he says, “I was working in retail and decided that I wanted to write for a living instead.”

So he started a blog devoted to news and tips about the iPhone and other Apple-centric topics. He started waking up early to write for a few hours before going to work. After work he’d come home, eat dinner with his wife, and—after she went to bed—write for a couple more hours.

Two years later, his blog was attracting a few hundred thousand unique visitors each month. That’s when he noticed that The Next Web was looking for writers. He applied for the job and, in early 2011, he joined the team as a full-time contributor.

Now, Matthew describes his morning routine like this: “I get up around 6 or, if I’m feeling lazy, 7 a.m. I make breakfast for myself and the wife, if she’s up. This includes a pot of drip coffee made in the fussiest way possible, with freshly ground beans that I buy from **Cafe Corazon**.”

By the time he sits down at the desk in his home office around 7:30, he has already scanned his Twitter and email for urgent items.

“Since TNW operates on a 24-hour news cycle, [in the morning] I’m usually chatting with the UK staff and accepting any handoffs from them,” he says. “From then on, I’m basically fielding stories that come in over the various newswire services, via our tips line, on Twitter, and from direct tips. Anything that falls into my areas of expertise or the Apple beat, I’ll read and parse, seeing if it’s something that our readers would be served by us analyzing or adding context to.”

He usually writes between six and ten posts every day, including everything from short news updates to 15,000-word reviews of operating systems. He also works on a variety of editorial pieces.

For a technology journalist, working in Fresno offers benefits and drawbacks. The biggest benefit, Matthew says, is the relative lack of distractions.

“Since there are few meet-ups, gatherings, hackathons, mixers, or general schmoozing sessions held here, I’m free to focus on producing work,” he says. “Uninterrupted time to think and write is an insanely precious commodity in a city like San Francisco, and I have it in spades here.”

The downside, he says, is that it’s hard to do face-to-face interviews, which often yield better journalistic results.

“That’s why I try to make it out to [San Francisco] or to Palo Alto at least once a month,” he says. “There are tech conferences or events held by one of the larger companies like Facebook, Twitter, Google, or Apple just about every month, so those are a good excuse.”

Although his career is just getting started, Matthew points out a few high points so far: interviewing **Andy Hertzfield** (who was on the original Macintosh team), discussing user interfaces in films with **Jayse Hansen** (who worked on *The Avengers* and *Iron Man* films), and hearing from former Pixar executive **Oren Jacob** about how *Toy Story 2* was accidentally deleted from the company’s servers while it was in production.

But, for Matthew, the simpler things are just as important.

“Every once in a while I get a sincere email from a reader thanking me for representing a topic well,” he says. “Those are nice.”

You can find Matthew’s writing at **The Next Web** and on Twitter **@mpanzarino**.

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