



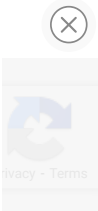
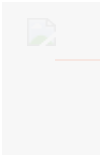
Scott DeLong Made Millions in 8 Months With His Startup. Here's Why He Now Wants To Sell it



Benny Luo

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In today's startup culture, companies could be sold for billions of dollars without making any revenue. Then there are companies like ViralNova, whose founder and sole partner Scott DeLong has found a way to make millions with his media startup within eight months from launch. This is a feat that many young entrepreneurs can only dream of for their companies.

For those that don't know, ViralNova.com is a media company that curates compelling content from all over the internet. Traffic to the site is driven through social media by using "click-bait" headlines to attract readers. Some of these headlines include:

- "People Explore Abandoned Buildings All The Time. But What This Guy Found... OMG."
- "This Pug Was Born Without Eyes. That's What Makes What He Does Even More Unbelievable."
- "I Would've Never Believed What This Guy Did Was Real... Til I Saw How He Did It. Mind-Blowing."

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According to [Business Insider](#), DeLong's site drew in 100 million visitors last month. The site makes money entirely through cheap ad networks like Google AdSense. To get an idea of how much ViralNova makes per month, Business Insider does the math for us:

"If we're being generous, ViralNova's AdSense rate might be \$2 per thousand views, \$1 for each ad on the page. Assuming ViralNova pulled in 200 million page views last month, he'd have made \$400,000 in December. He also pays two freelancers and he has to shell out some to keep his servers running. But most of that money is being pocketed by DeLong."

However, even after all this success DeLong is now looking to sell his site. Recently, he reportedly hired a domain broker to see if there would be any interested buyers. As for the reasons that DeLong wants to sell his site so soon, this is what he told us:



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“My normal business lifespan is about 2 years. I like to work hard on a project and make it the best it can be, but after about 2 years, I get burnt out and want to exit. This time around, I’m feeling that so much quicker because this has grown so much faster than I ever expected and I have an overwhelming feeling that this just isn’t what I want to do with my life. I do love to start something new.”

We recently had the pleasure of catching up with Scott DeLong over email. Here we discuss his entrepreneurial values and how attaining financial freedom has changed his life.



Tell us a little bit of your background and when you decided to become an entrepreneur.

“I grew up in a very small town in Ohio. My dad is the business inspiration in my life, owning a local car wash and laundromat. Because of that, I’ve always had the entrepreneurial itch inside me. Growing up, I always figured I would own a local brick and mortar or possibly some rental properties, but then I discovered the power of the Web. I started creating sites in the late 90s while in high school, but it wasn’t until 2004 that I realized real money could be made here.”

What made you want to start ViralNova in the first place? Did you think that a site like yours could be so lucrative at the time?

“I didn’t realize it would be this lucrative. Having just come off of selling another large site, I knew the power of Facebook and social traffic, but I didn’t think ViralNova would explode to this size. I had no idea it would spark so many imitators and ultimately change the way people are looking at headlines and virality. The reason I started it was simply to try to make some supplemental income while I traveled through Europe. I was bored not having a business, so I wanted to start something... and ViralNova is what I came up with.”



Did you have any mentors during your entrepreneurial journey? Do you feel like you need mentors in order to succeed?

"I didn't have any direct mentors holding my hand along the way. I don't think that's as important as just always keeping an open mind, talking to as many people in the industry as possible, and striving to be the best. You definitely need to learn from others to succeed but an actual mentor? No, not really. Some of the best ideas you'll ever have, however, will be sparked by a random conversation. So always keep your mind open and talk to other successful people every chance you get."

You've been in the press a lot lately because you've been promoting ViralNova out to prospective buyers. You mentioned that you'd rather sell it and start something new. Is it safe to say that your main passion is to just be a serial entrepreneur?

"Definitely. My normal business lifespan is about 2 years. I like to work hard on a project and make it the best it can be, but after about 2 years, I get burnt out and want to exit. This time around, I'm feeling that so much quicker because this has grown so much faster than I ever expected and I have an overwhelming feeling that this just isn't what I want to do with my life. I do love to start something new."

Suppose you do manage to sell ViralNova, what would be your next steps after?

"Short term, I would be taking a couple of months off. No business, no computers. Long-term, I want to focus my productivity on personal things. I want to get back into amateur filmmaking, learn to play the piano, and enjoy my life away from the computer. I'm sure over time I will be drawn back to starting something new. What that is, though, I'm not sure."

What are the biggest things you believe young aspiring entrepreneurs are doing that are holding them back from success?

"I think a lot of them are trying to re-invent the wheel. They're trying to do too much too soon. All of my successes thus far have come from web properties I can run myself or with just a couple of freelancers to help out. You don't need to make the next Facebook or Amazon... pick something you have a passion and talent for and own it."



Your site reportedly generates six-figures in revenue per month and with only two other freelancers on your team, you pocket most of it. How has your life changed since you've

become more financially successful? Do people treat you differently?

“I’m at risk of sounding very arrogant, but it’s been a few years since I’ve had to worry about money. That’s not the driving force behind ViralNova, so this has changed nothing for me in that regard. Until recently, no one knew who I was or what I’ve done. Since November when so much of my web “career” became public, no one seems to be treating me differently. I mean, I do get approached often from strangers looking for advice. But I don’t have high tastes and I live a very simple life. I have no interest in flaunting money, buying yachts, or living in mansions. I just want security for myself and those closest to me.”

Lastly, what is the most important lesson you’ve learned in your entrepreneurial experience so far?

“By far, the most important lesson I’ve learned is that money doesn’t make you happier. I know that the first response to that is, “Easy for you to say. You have money.” But that wasn’t always the case. I come from a hard-working, middle-class family and my first job out of college paid \$17,000/year. I was equally happy then as I am now. The entrepreneurial drive isn’t about money; it’s about succeeding and creating something that people love. Those who go into it with money on their minds will likely be looking for the easiest route to riches and ultimately fail.”

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Check out Scott’s site ViralNova.com



Benny Luo is the founder of NextShark

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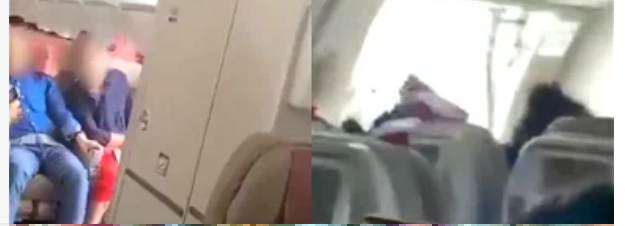
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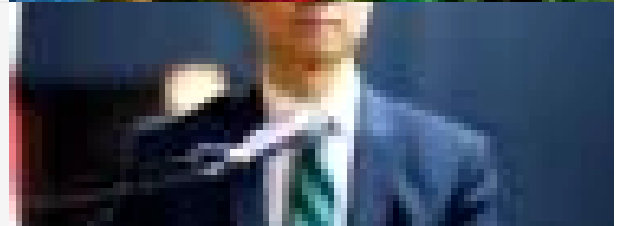
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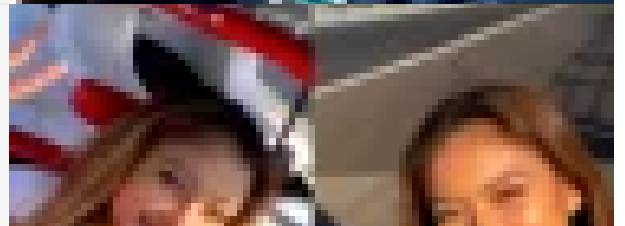
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