

INTERVIEWS

I'm Amit Agarwal, and This Is the Story Behind Digital Inspiration

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By Tessa Miller

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What does it take to become India's leading technology blogger? For almost a decade now, Amit Agarwal has been writing at [Digital Inspiration](#), coming up with guides and hacks to make life easier with the right tech. He's developed plenty of [cool scripts and apps](#), and even managed to find the time to author a [book](#). We caught up with the one-man blogging and hacking force to find out the tools and tricks he can't live without.

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*Intro and interview by Mihir Patkar.*

**Location:** [Agra](#), city of the Taj Mahal

**Current gig:** I write how-to guides at [Digital Inspiration](#), create websites ([Podcast Gallery](#), [Hundred Zeros](#)), build web apps ([Tall Tweets](#)), curate the [Indian Bloggers](#) directory, code [WordPress plugins](#), and produce [video screencasts](#). I'm also working on the next edition of [this book](#).

**Current computer:** Dell XPS running Windows 8 and an iMac for video editing

**Current mobile device:** Nexus 4 running Android

**One word that best describes how you work:** Enthusiastically (and diligently)

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What apps/software/tools can't you live without?

I am always connected but when it comes to apps, I still prefer using desktop software over web apps whenever possible. I use Microsoft Office 365 for writing, Photoshop CS2 for editing, SnagIt for image captures, Camtasia Studio for screencasting, and iMovie for video editing. Chrome is my preferred browser while [RescueTime](#) helps me track how I spend my time on the internet.

I'm Robby Macdonell, and This Is the Story Behind RescueTime

Managing your time can be a tricky task when you don't pay attention to the clock and find yourself

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On the mobile side, the apps that I use daily include Flipboard, Feedly, Pocket, News 360, Pocket Casts (for podcasts), Dropbox, and Good Reader. The web apps I cannot live without include Readability, Tweetdeck, IFTTT, and Storify (for curating social conversations). Google Keep is also a part of my workflow now.

I do spend a lot of time building stuff and most of these apps are built either in PHP, WordPress or Google Apps Script. Vim has been my favorite text editor all these years until I discovered Sublime Text. I have created my own open-source [password generator](#) that allows me to have complex but unique passwords for all my online accounts.

Besides your phone and computer, what gadget can't you live without?

The Kindle. I am no big fan of reading long-form content on the desktop so I just use Readability to push these stories to my Kindle and read them offline.

I like [Any.do](#) (also because it syncs with my Google Account), but I mostly use a pen and paper for remembering tasks that ought to be completed in a day or two. I also maintain a giant spreadsheet for tracking apps and web services that I may cover someday on my blog.

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There are tons of to-do list managers out there, but Any.do is one of the best. It's easy to use,...

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#### **What's your workspace like?**

I am the only employee working at Digital Inspiration and have a fairly spacious office for such a small team. You'll find a white standing desk (custom made), a pair of wooden sit-down desks, and a big glass board on one of the walls. We also have couches for visitors and some of these [indoor plants](#).

#### **What's your best time-saving trick?**

When I am working on something—be it a web app or a tutorial—I shut myself off from the internet. This helps me focus better and it also reduces the time it takes to complete a task.

I am big fan of keyboard shortcuts and avoid using the mouse as much as possible. It is not uncommon to have dozens of tabs open at any point of time and a Chrome add-on called [OneTab](#) comes very handy here. It squeezes all the open tabs into one thus speeding up your browser.

I get a fair amount of email every day but unless it is business related, I reserve the weekends for clearing the backlog. And before calling it a day, I always try to jot down a list of item that I work on the next day.

#### **What do you listen to while you work?**

I have a few playlists on YouTube—mostly Jagjit Singh bhajans and old Hindi songs—that I listen to every day.

#### **What's your sleep routine like?**

My [sleeping pattern](#) usually depends on kids' school, though on an average, I sleep about 6-7 hours per day. When they have school the next day, I usually retire by 11:30, drop them off to school, and then hit the gym.

#### **Are you more of an introvert or an extrovert?**

Mostly extrovert though it also depends on who I am with.

#### **Fill in the blank. I'd love to see \_\_\_\_\_ answer these same questions.**

[Om Malik](#).

#### **What's the best advice you've ever received?**

My eye physician once suggested the [20-20-20 rule](#) for people who spend too much at the computer and that really works. It basically says that you should look at an object 20 feet away for 20 seconds after every 20 minutes.

#### **Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

The best ideas come when I am away from the screen because then I get the time to think. [And] one more thing: never, ever work for free.

Continue [How I Work series](#) asks heroes, experts, and flat-out productive people to share their shortcuts, workspaces, routines, and more. Every other Wednesday we'll feature a new guest and the gadgets, apps, tips, and tricks that keep them going. Have someone you want to see featured, or questions you think we should ask? [Email Tessa](#).

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