

The blog hasn't been updated in a couple of weeks and I thought I'd let you know what was going on (or not going on, as the case may be). It's not really a big deal.

To give you an understanding of why no article has appeared for a couple of weeks, I need to tell you the mechanics of how articles get published here. It's something I've been meaning to do for a while, and this seems like an opportune time to get into the sausage-making of the blog.

In order to get a new article on this site, several things need to happen. Those things are, in chronological order –

1.

Something has to catch my eye in the world of government contracting, accounting, or compliance. It has to be of interest to me, personally. Something that sparks my passion. If I don't have that initial passion, the article doesn't get written. Yes, ideally the topic should be of general interest to a wider audience, but the truth of the matter is that if I can't find a reason to write the article, then the article doesn't get written.

2.

I have to have a hook. I need a lesson to be learned or a moral to the story. I need to visualize the first couple of sentences and, in general, how the article will flow. In a perfect world, I will see how the article will end, but frankly that doesn't happen every time. I know I have a good hook when I have a title. If I can't pick the title right off the bat, I'll try typing a couple of sentences to see where the article will go. Rarely (and I mean *very rarely*), I'll hold-off on giving the article a title until I've roughed-out a draft, just to see what the real hook is. From time to time, I'll type out a thousand or more words, only to realize that there is no hook. That article does not get published.

3.

I have to have the time to write. Each of these articles takes from an hour to three or more hours to type and proof-read. Finding that time is not easy. For example, this article is being written at 10:30 PM on a Thursday night. It will take at least an hour to write. So it probably won't be done until nearly midnight.

4.

After the article is written and proofed, I send it to Mark, my webmaster and publisher. Chances are, if I send it by midnight, he'll get it in the morning. No offense to Mark, but his morning is not my morning. He works around the clock some times, but more often he's not in the office until 9 AM or even 10 AM. So he won't see the new article until then, at best. But Mark has a job in addition to being my webmaster, so he may not be able to get to the new article right away.

5.

When Mark does get to the article, it takes him less than 30 minutes to prep it for publishing. He does some magic with Google docs and other assorted software, formatting my Word document into a web-ready article.

6.

When I send Mark the article, I specify when I want it to be published. Typically I write two or three articles on the weekend, and then he sets them up for publication at midnight on the dates I specify. I like a random pattern (as you may have noticed) because I like the notion that articles just spring up unexpectedly.

7.

I see the articles before you do, and I give them a once-over before publication, looking for typos and infelicitous syntax. I have the ability to edit them, and I frequently do edit them, even after publication, when I see something that bugs me.

So based on the foregoing, you may have noted some variables in the timing. There is the lag between me finding a topic and typing it up. There is the lag between me sending the article to Mark and his ability to get to it. And there is the lag between when Mark puts it on the site and when I set it for publication. Those variables affect the timing of when you see a blog article.

What happened in the past couple of weeks is that Mark's "real" job took him out of the office and on the road for 10 days. I have a couple of articles in his queue for him to get to, but he's not been able to get to a computer to do his thing. He gets back to the office tomorrow, and

In Case You Were Wondering ...

Written by Nick Sanders

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then the articles will start to flow again. This will be the third article in his queue when he returns.

I am also working on two other articles. One is the promised article on DCAA audit quality, and the other is a review of the recent ASBCA decision on concurrent changes to cost accounting practices. Each of those is rather long and involved, so they'll take a while to finish. But when they are done, Mark should be able to get to them quickly.

So all this detail may be of little interest to you. But some of you may have been wondering, and I trust this answers your questions.