



IN BRIEF

TIME TO ROAM

- 1** Phill Terry and Rod Bruem launched their camping and caravanning magazine, *Time to Roam*, in print and online, from their home in Sydney in 2012.
- 2** After moving to a farm near Lismore in northern New South Wales, leaving their graphic designer based in Sydney, they published an issue in February 2013. To do it, they used key technologies supported by Telstra: NBN, mobile, broadband and online file sharing, video-conferencing and cloud-based accounting systems.
- 3** Phill and Rod plan to extend online services to ease customer management and grow the business. With a print circulation of 10,000, it sells via subscription and through 2000 newsagents nationwide, as well as to digital readers.

→ timetoroam.com.au



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Phill Terry (with Largo the dog) and Rod Bruem (top) have escaped the city rat race by using the NBN.

Photography: Steve Cook

On the road again

Despite an uncertain future for print in the digital age, two caravan enthusiasts launched a magazine to share their experiences and passion. The publication now has the largest circulation in its sector.

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It was an opportunity to restore a caravan that sparked Phill Terry and Rod Bruem's interest in camping and their journey to launch *Time to Roam* magazine.

"When I was a cadet journalist, I lived in a 1969 Viscount caravan in my aunt's backyard in Lithgow, and when she moved into an aged care facility she offered it to us," Rod says. "Phill wanted to restore a caravan, so we completed the project and saw a market opening for a magazine."

Faced with the question of how to make the magazine a success, the pair believed they understood their market. "An important thing is the readership is over age 40 and that age group lives magazines," says Rod.

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

Phill and Rod launched their publication in Sydney in 2012 with Phill and a designer working from home. Rod was the after-hours editor, as his day job is working with the corporate affairs team at Telstra.

A year after the launch, the pair's hankering to return to the country proved overwhelming. "We took a trip up to the north coast and discovered an amazing farm near Lismore," Rod says. "So we thought we'd move the company as there are a lot of

benefits to having a business in the country."

With broadband and great mobile services making collaboration easier with their Sydney-based designer, they realised they could make it work.

The pair initially aimed to build the magazine's base via subscription, in digital and print, by circulating it free at caravan parks, visitor centres and at recreational vehicle dealers nationally. However,

"These days you're sending five megabyte files through very fast."

Phill Terry

protests from paying readers prompted Phill and Rod to tweak the business model to an all-paid-for publication, with the print version available via subscription and at about 2000 newsagents nationwide. Enthusiasts can also subscribe or buy e-magazines at timetoroam.com.au.

Phill and Rod also engage with their readers through Facebook, as it's the social media channel of choice for the more mature readers. "People want to [use social media to] share their experiences," Rod says. "They want to share photos of caravans they've restored, their travel tips and experiences."

NBN MADE IT POSSIBLE

Now *Time to Roam* is established, for Rod the publication is a part-time occupation, completed on weekends at the farm.

"There was no broadband here [at the farm] when we arrived, so we had to open an office in Lismore to accommodate the publication" he says. "When the NBN came along it was a very simple process and the Wi-Fi modem gave us great range. And I know if there is any problem, Telstra has a local representative in Lismore, plus the 24/7 online support is fantastic," Rod adds. "That's really important to us because in business, downtime is deadly."

IMPORTANCE OF FILE SHARING

The pair believes file-sharing is the most important bandwidth-intensive activity that relies on the NBN through Telstra. "In the old days, sending two megabytes of data took a long while. However, these days you're sending large files through easily," says Phill.

The business uses online file-sharing service DropBox, which Rod believes has revolutionised modern publishing.

"I can't imagine life without it now," he says. He shares the customer database with the office manager in Lismore, and files for the magazine with their designer, Mitch Morgan, in Sydney.

OTHER BENEFITS

Rod and Phill also use video-conferencing to connect with their advertisers, article subjects, readers, office staff and other stakeholders, which saves on travel costs. They also use cloud-based accounting.

"As our business grows, we'll be able to use online customer relationship management tools and do more work with people as they are out and about," Rod says.

"I don't think caravanning has ever gone out of fashion," he adds. "People love the outdoors, they love camping in caravan or tent. It's something that Australian families have done for years and will continue to do." [5]

INSIGHTS FROM TELSTRA

"Businesses in the publishing sector are facing the challenge of audiences consuming content on a wide range of devices and platforms. Producing and distributing that content, however, has been made easier with the advent of super-fast internet through the NBN. By enabling faster downloads, more responsive cloud computing and media streaming, the NBN is an effective way to help boost productivity and promote collaboration."

RAHUL DUDEJA, DIRECTOR BUSINESS NBN PRODUCTS

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