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At the University of Dayton, Bill Cooper is known as a full-time, first-year business management and marketing double major with an interest in technology and gadgets.

Online, he's known by hundreds of thousands as "The iPod Kid." With more than 68,000 subscribers (and counting) to his YouTube account, he is among the top 1,000 accounts of more than 48 million. His videos — mostly reviews of applications for Apple's iPod, iPhone and iPad — have been watched more than 6.3 million times.

His secret to YouTube success?

"Just enjoy what you do. Be honest — my reviews are never scripted, and I've turned down offers to endorse products I don't like. I respond to my commenters, and I give the people what they want," he said.

It helps to be a little lucky, too.

In 2008, like any other 16-year-old with an interest in technology, Cooper was eagerly anticipating the release of Apple's second-generation iPod Touch. For days prior to the iPod's release, the Columbus native would call his local Apple store asking when their first shipment would arrive.

After receiving several vague answers, he and a friend decided to just drop in to the store. His timing was perfect: a shipment had just arrived. The checkout clerk told him he was the first person in Ohio — and one of the first in the country — to buy the device. That gave him an idea.

"I know people love to see unboxings of new products, and when I got home, I couldn't find any videos on YouTube of the new iPod," he said.

So he decided he'd be the first. Since he didn't have a webcam or tripod, he hung his family's digital camera on a golf club he had wedged between a stack of pillows with books on top to keep it from moving.

Within hours, tens of thousands of people from around the world had watched his seven-minute "unboxing" video. By the time he got home from school the next day, the video had reached 100,000 views. He uploaded a second video featuring the iPod Touch, and a week later he had uploaded his first review of iPod apps.

It didn't take long before people began asking for more videos, making recommendations for apps and products that he should
"Two days in the Internet world is like 10 years in real-life, so I had to go buy a new case or accessory every week, and being a 16-year-old with no job, it was pretty tough to do off of allowance," he said.

Fortunately, three months after he posted his first video, YouTube contacted him inviting him to become a partner, which allowed him to have advertising on his page and to earn revenue. He created an LLC — App-A-Day LTD — and "The iPod Kid" was born.

"I was able to buy more and more products to review, companies saw it was going well, so they started sending me products to review," he said. "Before you know it, I’m paying for one of the best colleges in the world with just my YouTube money. That's a pretty sweet deal."

His production process is simple. He tries to create two or three videos a week, reviewing mostly apps but occasionally featuring how-to’s, tech products and accessories. Once he finds an app or product he likes, he tests it out for about a week, learning it inside and out. He then sits down at his desk behind a camera and usually does just one take. The whole process of filming and uploading the video takes just about 20 minutes.

When people first learn about his online persona, he says they assume he’s "just some nerd" with a hobby. They're often stunned to learn he's the among the top-5 biggest technology reviewers on YouTube receiving an average of 10,000 to 20,000 views per video.

But Cooper prefers to be low-key. He maintains a full course load and a well-balanced social life. His dorm room looks like any other room on campus. The only clues to his online business are a handheld video camera, small tripod and a fold-out "film studio" he keeps tucked away in the corner of his desk.

Although he enjoys what he does, he doesn't plan to be "The iPod Kid" forever. A business management and marketing double major, he would like to be the next "Steve Jobs," landing a job with a tech company and one day taking the helm of a business once again.

"I'm a full-time student, and I have one of the coolest jobs for a kid my age," he said. "The fact that I get to do fun things every day like review video games, I'm just extremely fortunate."

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