

Funding the Future

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A regular commentator on this blog, who posts using the name Ex-Teacher, but whose name is known to me, [said this recently](#), in my response to [my suggestion that I might add Substack](#) to the range of platforms I post on:

Richard, help me understand a bit better.

~~- recently upon retirement, you'd said you welcomed the time to think ...~~
~~- you've more recently said you are v busy (there's a lot going on!)~~

What are the essential differences between Substack and your existing blog?

Would the material essentially be similar/same?

Would the readership essentially be similar?

Can you simply redirect?

What is the driver to utilise more platforms? Wider reach, revenue? Could this be achieved other than by more platforms?

Ensure you have time to stop, pause, think.

I think that these are all good questions, and I am happy to share my thinking because I value feedback from readers here.

Let me deal with the last issue first, which is around giving myself time to think. I recall, only a few months ago, craving this luxury. The pressure of university and other grant-funded work was very high at that time, and as a consequence, I found it challenging to create blogs and videos to the standard that I wanted. There was insufficient time to think, or at least, to manage the thoughts and ideas that I had.

That was one of my major motivations for my so-called retirement, and it has succeeded. I now have very few commitments beyond this blog and its related YouTube channel and almost all my other activities (with Sheffield University, Copenhagen Business School, the Green New Deal Group, as a director of the Corporate Accountability Network, and as a partner in Finance for the Future) have all been closed

now, entirely at my choice. I enjoyed all these things, and regret none of them, or what was achieved, but it was time to move on, and to create space for myself.

What I am now, however, finding as a result is that I have got vast numbers of ideas, and new ones are continually crashing into my brain, demanding attention. I am not complaining about that, but what I am also having to do is create new routines in order to manage them. It's an interesting complaint, and one that I am happy to deal with. I am not needing more time to think now; what I now need is a work routine to manage all the ideas I have.

Let me provide an example. It was only last week that I asked for more ideas on videos here, and maybe 80 were suggested. In practice, I very much doubt that any of them will be produced exactly in the form that was asked for, or with the narrow focus that many had. That is because videos have, as I now know, to have a sufficiently broad appeal to attract a wide enough audience to provide us with a return that guarantees that we can keep making them.

However, having absorbed some of those ideas, and having reviewed the 80 to 100 ideas that I already had noted down, I reflected on how to create new videos in a way that will, I hope, appeal to viewers while satisfying my own curiosity, whilst keeping the team here happy, as well as providing us with sufficient revenue.

The last point is particularly important. I have decided to expand our team this autumn, by adding a researcher on what is likely to be a full-time basis, and may be a graphic designer, although they would be a contractor to be used as and when required.

At the same time that all this was being thought about, I noticed the Substack phenomenon of new followers subscribing even though I had posted nothing there at all, so far.

I did, as a consequence, reflect on how to create a new workflow, having also spent some time watching (yet more) videos on how to create a successful YouTube channel where revenues from views alone are not the only source of income. As a consequence, I decided that at least some of our videos need to have a new theme.

It is clear from reading the comments on this blog that there is a strong desire for what are, in effect, targeted educational materials. As a consequence, I sat down and wrote out a list of more than 100 video titles, every one of which was a question. These are grouped around themes such as questions about political economy, issues around money, how to create fair taxation, mechanisms to tackle inequality, how modern monetary theory works, and a number of other topics. Since writing that initial list, around 50 more have been added, and I have not even begun to address issues around savings, investment and related topics.

A work plan was then developed, quite rapidly. This revolves around searching my

existing writing on these themes. With more than 23,000 blog posts to draw upon, there is ample material for me to use.

I expect to use AI to produce an initial video plan based on that existing work. That video plan will create a PowerPoint, which I will then edit, as required. As a matter of fact, I am now using PowerPoint as a prompting tool, via a teleprompter, when we are making videos, so this makes complete sense, and speeds up a time-consuming process we are already using. It also means that I do not overlook material I might otherwise forget.

I stress, AI will not write the video, which, as usual, I will deliver unscripted, but based upon the structure that I will have created, to which AI will have contributed by summarising my existing work.

The result will be that we will then have a YouTube video to answer a specific question.

That will then generate a transcript for use on this blog.

What is new is that it is now my intention that the transcript should then be edited to become a narrative chapter on the same theme. It will, in other words, be edited from spoken English into written English without seeking to change the meaning. That new version will then become a Substack post.

Then, in due course, and presuming this works, those Substack posts, which will include reading lists referencing both my blogs and other work, will become chapters in a book, or even books. Whether these would be e-books, like [Money for Nothing and My Tweets for Free](#), which I produced a few years ago, or books that a more mainstream publisher might wish to put out is a matter to be decided upon.

The point is that working in this way means that one idea will produce four outputs:

- * A YouTube video
- * A blog transcript
- * A Substack post
- * A book in due course

You could, of course, argue that this is a process involving a lot of repetition. That, however, is how most people learn, and so I make no apology for that.

In this framework, posting on Substack makes sense. I would not wish to post two versions of material on the same theme here. Offering different versions on different platforms is a way to meet different needs and expectations.

I would also expect that the Substack posts would be free, but like Robert Reich and

Paul Krugman, as well as Stephanie Kelton, I would keep open the possibility of adding some paid-for content.

Comments are welcome.