

## BUSINESS PROFILE

### Lessons for the tech-minded

#### Tim Broom takes new ITProTV site to \$1 million

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As classrooms continue to move from traditional to virtual, one new Gainesville online company is making waves by reporting more than \$1 million in profits in its first year.

Under the company name EdutainmentLIVE, the website ITPro.tv takes a lesson from the playbook of Lynda.com — a popular software-training site — in offering premium instruction to paid subscribers. The difference is that ITProTV is solely for information technology professionals, and it resembles a talk show instead of a screencast with a voiceover.



*Doug Finger/Staff photographer*

Tim Broom, owner of the North Florida franchise of New Horizons Computer Learning Centers, is pictured in the television studio of his newest venture, EdutainmentLIVE/ITProTV.

"We're not comedians. We don't try to be comedians," said Tim Broom, ITProTV's proclaimed Master of My Domain. "But we're like IT guys for IT guys."

For the IT-minded, that's training in software certifications such as CompTIA A+, Security+ and CCNA.

With planning starting about two years ago and launching in November 2013, ITProTV was founded by Broom and Don Pezet, an IT expert and longtime instructor under Broom's other IT-learning business, New Horizons.

"That traditional training model is really just not growing like it used to," Pezet said. "And so [Broom] and I have always been really aggressive about finding new technologies, new directions to move in, and trying to anticipate what the future of training is."

Headquartered in Anaheim, California, and proclaimed as "the world's largest independent IT training company," New Horizons centers are owned by franchisees.

Broom launched his first in 2000 in Gainesville, followed later by Pensacola, then Greensboro and Charlotte, North Carolina, with another business partner.

But Broom, 46, has put his New Horizons stake up for sale to focus solely on ITProTV, which will allow him to break free from the limitations and regional borders that come with being under an umbrella company.

He said his next target is the global market, adding that there are already more than 10,000 paying ITProTV subscribers in 43 countries.

"The content we cover is actually the same as we do in our authorized, certified classes at New Horizons that cost thousands of dollars," Broom said, "but it's more in an informal format that's easier to use and easier to view.

"And if it's easier to view, then more people will watch longer so they learn more."

A monthly subscription costs \$57, with discounts offered through promo codes. The per-month rate also is cheaper for an annual subscription.

ITProTV has six employees, and it shares space with Broom's New Horizons center on Northwest Fourth Boulevard off Tower Road.

Inside is a studio where instructors give daily IT lessons, which are streamed live online at ITPro.tv. Anyone can watch the live feed, but only subscribers can access archived shows.

They also can participate in a chat box during the broadcast.

"We look at it as, the community is helping us to create better content," Broom said, "because if there's something that might be confusing or left out or we rushed it or made a mistake on an acronym, they get to help us correct it."

Video-editing work is minimal, as the day's broadcast is divided into lessons by a few simple cuts.

"We basically trim from the beginning and end, and it goes up on the Web — none of this post-production stuff," Broom said.

This rapid turn-around time allows ITProTV to have lessons on new software soon after release, he said.

Broom's professional start doesn't lend itself to his present career. He spent 12 years in the trucking business around Florida as a dock supervisor and salesperson. But while taking New Horizons classes himself prior to being a franchisee, he kept the inspiration he got early on from Leo Laporte.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Laporte was a star of the TV channel TechTV, and he now runs the This Week in Tech online series. Broom said he wants his on-air instructors to become like Laporte — well-known figures in the world of tech broadcasts.

"I want to create stars, because if they're stars," he said, "then that's the differentiator between us and somebody else."

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