

---

# Contact Sheet

A Weblog by Scott Steffens

<http://contactsheet.org>

---

# Contents

Leica Digilux 2	1
Collateral Damage	2
Cork	2
Back.	3
AIGA: Why?	5
No Translation Necessary	6
Portuguese Supermarkets	7
Leaving on Saturday	7
The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint	8
A Picture of One Year Ago	12
Leica Digilux 1	13
Modern Dog	14
Google Holes	15
Woody Allen's Typeface	16
Printed Web Gallery	17
NN/g: Return on Investment	17
Coast	17
Research & Meetup.com	18
City Scene	19
Friendly URLs & Site Maintenance	19
White House E-Mail	20
What they're saying...	20
The Breeze of Transformation	21
Porq: The Other Fake Meat	23
Tour de Web	24
Adobe-Apple Tiff	25
destination: India	26
Freshly Vacationed	26
Design School Web Sites	26
House Ownership & the Seattle Beautification Society	27
A Friendly Reminder	28
Safari 1.0 & Browser Compliance	29
Photography	29
The Web Is Not PDF	30
Available Domains	31
Trackback & other notification systems	31
Education in an Adolescent Profession	32
Paper Scissors ROCK	34
Unicast	34
Designers Shouldn't Code?	35
Finally compliant	36
NYT News Tracker II: Opt-in E-mail	37
NYT News Tracker	37
Weekend	38
Webby Awards	38
Only Dancing	38
The Digital City	39
Geek R&eacute;sum&eacute;	39
Seattle: the Sequel	40

---

The Usability Pitch	40
Chagrin	41
CSS & Bandwidth	42
More French	42
French is just another word for nothing left to lose	43
Seattle Newspaper War	43
New Threads	43
Reinventing the Wheel	44
Analog Reigns	44
The Designer is the Message	45
People	46
Visual Explanation	46
Born Liar	47
Governor	47
Hockey Stick	47
Bad Choice of Words	48
How to make friends by Telephone	48
Fence	49
BUY STITCHES TODAY	49
The Dinner Party	50
Advertising in books	50
Iraqis complain, NYT slims down	51
Quark 6 Translation	51
ME STILL OPEN	51
Sugar Daddy Be Gone	52
LA Times Talks About Altered Photo	52
No More Foolin' the NY Times	53
Welcome Contact Sheet	53
CNN is working to confirm	54
Seattle Monorail - The Latest Route	54
BBC Redesign	54
Decoding Visual Language in News Content	55
Rummy Vexes the Enemy	55
Under the Sand	55
Pull My Finger	56
Breadcrumbs	56
Smart Home, Dumb Idea	57
New Tasty and Amazing	57

---

```
<!--
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
<rdf:Description
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/12/03/leica_digilux_2.html"
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/35"
  dc:title="Leica Digilux 2"
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/12/03/leica_digilux_2.html"
  dc:subject="Photography"
  dc:description=" Except for a new removable lense format, Leica has implemented nearly every
wish I had into their new Digilux 2 camera that was released this week. Namely the focus, zoom and
aperture rings on the lense will give this..."
  dc:creator="ss"
  dc:date="2003-12-03T12:12:46-08:00" />
</rdf:RDF>
-->
```

## Leica Digilux 2

Wednesday, December 3, 2003

Except for a new removable lense format, Leica has implemented nearly every wish I had into their new Digilux 2 camera that was released this week. Namely the focus, zoom and aperture rings on the lense will give this the feel of a real camera. Playing into the hands of customers like me, they're marketing it as "the 'analog' digital camera".

There's been a lot of talk about the new arrangement of features since the press release issued Monday, but all of this talk has everything to do with the perceived user interface since the public hasn't actually shot with it yet, which shows how critical the camera UI is for serious photographers. It looks like we'll have to wait 'til February to get our grubby hands on it to have a look at the image quality. Hopefully the image quality, which was already strides ahead of its class with the Digilux 1, will improve in the same measures as the look and feel of this new camera.

Filed in Photography | Comments (0)

| TrackBack

(0)

```
<!--
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
<rdf:Description
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/11/26/collateral_damage.html"
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/34"
  dc:title="Collateral Damage"
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/11/26/collateral_damage.html"
  dc:subject="Politics"
  dc:description="Last week I received an 8 x 10 glossy print of our President, with an encribed
message from the Republican National Committee thanking me for my support. If by "support" they
```

---

mean getting to know my representatives with near-weekly letters..."

```
dc:creator="ss"  
dc:date="2003-11-26T10:31:19-08:00" />  
</rdf:RDF>  
-->
```

## Collateral Damage

Wednesday, November 26, 2003

Last week I received an 8 x 10 glossy print of our President, with an enscribed message from the Republican National Committee thanking me for my support. If by "support" they mean getting to know my representatives with near-weekly letters urging them to vote against, filibuster, or otherwise stop whatever atrocity the White House might be up to, then I say, "You're welcome" to the Republican National Committee.

Then in yesterday's mail I received a letter from Dick Cheney asking for my continued support against the Democrats and their special interest groups (didn't Halliburton, Cheney's former (or current?) employer just get a no-bids contract with the Defense Department for rebuilding Iraq where they reported to their shareholders a net profit of something something like 300 million?

Given how I feel about the goings-on of the current administration, it seems that the White House's direct mail campaigns have about as much precision as their "smart bombs" have in Iraq.

Filed in Politics | Comments (4)

| TrackBack

(0)

<!--

```
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"  
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"  
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
```

```
<rdf:Description
```

```
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/11/18/cork.html"  
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/29"  
  dc:title="Cork"  
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/11/18/cork.html"  
  dc:subject="Real Life"
```

```
  dc:description=" Driving around southern Portugal in the province of Alentejo, the land is sparsely  
populated and full of cork trees. In the 17th century Dom Pérignon was the first to use cork in glass  
bottles for sealing wine. Two-thirds of..."
```

```
  dc:creator="ss"  
  dc:date="2003-11-18T11:39:59-08:00" />
```

```
</rdf:RDF>
```

-->

## Cork

Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Driving around southern Portugal in the province of Alentejo, the land is sparsely populated and full of cork trees.

---

In the 17th century Dom Pérignon was the first to use cork in glass bottles for sealing wine.

Two-thirds of the world's cork comes from these fields.

It takes 40 years for a cork tree to grow bark thick enough for harvest. Its useful life lasts another 150-200 years, harvesting the bark every 9 years.

Farmers write the year of the last harvest on each tree, so they can quickly scour the countryside for any ripe bark.

Filed in Real Life | Comments (2)

| TrackBack

(0)

<!--

```
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
```

```
<rdf:Description
```

```
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/10/30/back.html"
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/27"
  dc:title="Back."
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/10/30/back.html"
  dc:subject="Portugal"
```

```
  dc:description=" We've reached that critical time where we've been home longer than
the span of our vacation, where we should now be unaffected by the experiences we encountered and
unhindered by the freedom that was several weeks of vacation. At..."
```

```
  dc:creator="ss"
  dc:date="2003-10-30T15:51:50-08:00" />
```

```
</rdf:RDF>
```

```
-->
```

## Back.

Thursday, October 30, 2003

We've reached that critical time where we've been home longer than the span of our vacation, where we should now be unaffected by the experiences we encountered and unhindered by the freedom that was several weeks of vacation. At least the equation goes something like that when enduring the effects of a break-up -- hopefully it's more lasting for the positive effects of vacation.

Roman ruins in Conimbriga, Portugal

---

Now four weeks after the trip, the greatest impression left lingering was the great perspective of visiting well-preserved Roman and prehistoric ruins in Western Iberia. Specifically, the concrete evidence (pun intended) that empires go in cycles, and many Portuguese, as well as citizens from other countries that once ruled the world (i.e. Greece, Italy, England) all know that the clock is ticking for the current US empire. Of course you can think about this independently, but standing in front of acres of evidence -- standing within the walls on tile floors where families ate and kids played 2200 years ago -- is quite overwhelming. This notion of empires passing the torch is realized more in countries with longer histories and makes the American cultural invasion that much more palatable. This made me feel neither good nor bad.

But what did make me feel good was seeing my ever-radiant in-laws and Portuguese friends. It's incomprehensible that we only get to see them for a few weeks each year (and I'm not the one who's 4000 miles from home). For the last month I've been wracking my brain trying to figure out a way of straddling the Atlantic a bit more often while keeping gainfully employed. Simply moving to Europe would cause the same problem in reverse. Living for part of the year in each place, to keep friendships close (and reap the benefits of both cultures), is key.

It was a hot Portuguese September with temperatures approaching 40C (104F), and now Seattle is dark, damp and cold in comparison. The several weeks of silence on this page were the result of the inevitable post-vacation blues: the transition between weeks of constant stimuli and spontaneity in all aspects of daily life, back to the holds of work and routine. Lots of northerly staring-out-of-windows-into-the-silence (think Edward Hopper) has ensued. This is character-building.

And now for some sweeping generalizations of Portugal:

Portuguese are masters of language, and instead of not knowing the language when traveling -- inconceivable! -- they'll insist on adding a fifth or sixth language to their personal repertoire to stay in-the-know when traveling to a new land.

The nightlife. In Lisbon, hanging out with friends, you look at your watch sometime after dinner and think how did it get to be 5am already? because there are thousands of people on the street, more than an 9pm Friday night in downtown Seattle. Some bars are open only from midnight 6am, Thursday Saturday nights. In Seattle, the streets are dead after midnight, and even though legal closing time is 2am (a lunatic idea when explaining the concept to Europeans and frankly a lunatic idea in its own right), there are only a handful of places that actually remain open until the very end.

There are no non-smoking areas in public spaces or the majority of offices and workplaces.

The national sport for old women in small non-tourist towns way out in the country is to stare blatantly and unabashedly at strange, tall, light-haired cityfolk who stop in these small non-tourist towns to take pictures of fountains, mills, and other artifacts unworthy of notice to these old women. Maria Amelia, look, now he's taking a picture of the goats!

The crazed driving culture is completely contrary to the pacific Portuguese way of life

Pictures, soon!

---

Filed in Portugal | Comments (1)

| TrackBack

(0)

<!--

```
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
```

```
<rdf:Description
```

```
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/10/09/aiga_why.html"
```

```
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/28"
```

```
  dc:title="AIGA: Why?"
```

```
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/10/09/aiga_why.html"
```

```
  dc:subject="Graphic Design"
```

```
  dc:description="Last week I attended an AIGA lecture given by Clement Mok, president of AIGA.
For those who don't know, he's the rebel-rouser behind a movement in the design
industry to garner more respect for the role of design and to..."
```

```
  dc:creator="ss"
```

```
  dc:date="2003-10-09T12:56:34-08:00" />
```

```
</rdf:RDF>
```

```
-->
```

## AIGA: Why?

Thursday, October 9, 2003

Last week I attended an AIGA lecture given by Clement Mok, president of AIGA. For those who don't know, he's the rebel-rouser behind a movement in the design industry to garner more respect for the role of design and to take the focus off designers and onto designing. Communication Arts also ran a copy of Mok's article this summer to maximize exposure of his message throughout the community.

He's been giving this lecture for a year and a half and, frankly, he seemed unfocused and tired of the material. From the perspective of this audience member, it was far too abstract to do anything with. Then again, my attention span has been a bit edgy after watching a 4-hour play (Homebody/Kabul) and a 4-hour movie (Lawrence of Arabia) within a few days' time, but I digress. The lecture's take-away was a 12-step guide aimed to unify the collective process of design and demand respect from our colleagues in other professions. The goal is achieved, as Mok explained, when a potential product needs created and they invite a financial guy, an engineer, a manufacturing specialist, and a designer to the table. Respect of design means that designers need to get involved from the beginning. But this riling up is reduced to a 12-step guide?

I believe most of what Mr. Mok said is true, that design is often reduced to something the black turtlenecks do to a product at the end. But if this is meant to rouse the troops, I think we need a more exciting message--a lot more jumping around and less placating lectures. If the shit's hitting the fan, why the calm repose?

One problem, it seems, is that there is no easy way to evaluate a designer's abilities, and the way we interface with clients is inconsistent and often hypocritical from designer to designer and from firm to firm. Even when a new designer joins the team, there's often a sense of threat if they have too big a role and too little qualifications -- since these qualifications are currently left to subjectivity in the design field.

Doctors can't perform certain procedues unless they have the education and experience. Even mountaineers have a strict code to show one's abilities. You quickly know where a climber stands if they can lead on a 5.9 rock route, and can quickly evaluate if they're qualified for a particular outing. In design, you can ask a candidate to whip out their portfolio, but what was their involvement in a

---

particular piece? What experience, in thinking, in research, in getting things done, do they have beyond the finished portfolio pieces?

We can find benchmarks in our field--if we can't evaluate ourselves on specific criteria, how can our clients? I don't believe our portfolios should be a our only criterion in which we're judged. As the dot-com bubble proved, I think we need some further level of status to separate those designers who are committed to the profession, and those that have abruptly switched gears, ripped-off another's style and thrown together a pretty portfolio to become the Art Director of a new start-up. This happened in huge numbers in Seattle in the late 1990's.

But Clement spoke against all of this, if only briefly. Instead, he said that we need more people designing to expose the value of what we do to as many as possible. I don't disagree with this notion, but I stand firm that the problem lies not only with how we talk about design but also about how we talk about ourselves.

But I haven't really addressed the heart of what he said--most of his talk is in the articles, which you can read for yourself by following the links above. You can get a more interactive version of the 12-step designing process with examples at [designing.aiga.org/](http://designing.aiga.org/).

Oh, and I've returned from Portugal.

Filed in Graphic Design | Comments (2)

| TrackBack

(0)

<!--

```
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
```

```
<rdf:Description
```

```
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/10/01/no_translation_necessary.html"
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/26"
  dc:title="No Translation Necessary"
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/10/01/no_translation_necessary.html"
  dc:subject="Adspeak"
  dc:description=" But, for the record, the headline reads, "Don't feel like this..."..."
  dc:creator="ss"
  dc:date="2003-10-01T09:09:19-08:00" />
```

```
</rdf:RDF>
```

```
-->
```

## No Translation Necessary

Wednesday, October 1, 2003

But, for the record, the headline reads, "Don't feel like this..."

Filed in Adspeak, Portugal | Comments (2)

| TrackBack

(0)

<!--

```
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#">
```

```
xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
<rdf:Description
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/09/09/portuguese_supermarkets.html"
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/24"
  dc:title="Portuguese Supermarkets"
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/09/09/portuguese_supermarkets.html"
  dc:subject="Portugal"
  dc:description="Aisle space in a Portuguese supermarket dedicated to the following items: Butter:
58 feet Yogurt: 144 feet Olive oil: 65 feet Wine: 280 feet (with three kinds of (bad) California wines
to choose from) Peanut butter: .5 - two kinds,..."
  dc:creator="ss"
  dc:date="2003-09-09T13:10:16-08:00" />
</rdf:RDF>
-->
```

## Portuguese Supermarkets

Tuesday, September 9, 2003

Aisle space in a Portuguese supermarket dedicated to the following items:

Butter: 58 feet

Yogurt: 144 feet

Olive oil: 65 feet

Wine: 280 feet (with three kinds of (bad) California wines to choose from)

Peanut butter: .5 -- two kinds, and 3 euros for a small jar of Skippy

Portuguese beer, like making love in a canoe, is fucking close to water

Filed in Portugal | Comments (5)

| TrackBack

(0)

<!--

```
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
<rdf:Description
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/09/04/leaving_on_saturday.html"
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/23"
  dc:title="Leaving on Saturday"
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/09/04/leaving_on_saturday.html"
  dc:subject="Portugal"
  dc:description=" Find housesitter Find passport Find leftover Euro monopoly money from last trip
Buy decent California wine for Portuguese friends to try (since it's largely unavailable in wine-
producing Europe) ...and some Makers Mark for my father-in-law Magazines for 12 hours..."
  dc:creator="ss"
  dc:date="2003-09-04T10:28:29-08:00" />
</rdf:RDF>
-->
```

## Leaving on Saturday

Thursday, September 4, 2003

---

Find housesitter  
Find passport  
Find leftover Euro monopoly money from last trip  
Buy decent California wine for Portuguese friends to try (since it's largely unavailable in wine-producing Europe)  
...and some Makers Mark for my father-in-law  
Magazines for 12 hours of travel  
Buy President Bush greeting cards from Archie McPhees  
Print invitations to anniversary party, Portuguese edition  
Wax and shine cheeks for kissing  
Leave instructions for plant watering  
Find electrical power plug converters for camera & laptop  
Find guidebooks  
Review conjugations of ser, estar, comer, dormir  
3 weeks of CDs  
Review State Department's Travel Advisory for Portugal

Filed in Portugal | Comments (4)

| TrackBack

(0)

<!--

```
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
```

```
<rdf:Description
```

```
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/08/28/the_cognitive_style_of_powerpoint.html"
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/20"
  dc:title="The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint"
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/08/28/the_cognitive_style_of_powerpoint.html"
  dc:subject="Graphic Design"
  dc:description=" Several weeks ago Edward Tufte released his new essay The Cognitive Style of
PowerPoint. I received my copy in the mail the other day and spent 20 minutes reading his amusing,
but sound, research. I get the feeling that..."
  dc:creator="ss"
  dc:date="2003-08-28T15:26:25-08:00" />
```

```
</rdf:RDF>
```

```
-->
```

## The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint

Thursday, August 28, 2003

Several weeks ago Edward Tufte released his new essay The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint. I received my copy in the mail the other day and spent 20 minutes reading his amusing, but sound, research. I get the feeling that he'll largely be preaching to the converted with this effort since I know no designers--largely Tufte's audience--that give presentations using PowerPoint. Mainly, it will fuel the fire of disgruntlement to those audiences imprisoned by PowerPoint's style.

Before reading, I was curious to know how Tufte would attack PowerPoint for 24 pages--I've never known him to show such hostility towards an individual product. But he does an excellent job illustrating the enormous problems with PowerPoint culture--how PP slideshows are for the presenter--a good speaker doesn't need to read from public notecards. PP bullet lists are making us stupid by

---

heavily diluting intelligent thought. The resolution of information is lost in the abbreviated format the program forces upon us. "Many true statements are too long to fit on a PP slide." He occasionally throws in over-the-top jabs comparing Powerpoint users with power-hungry dictators like Stalin and Ceasar, that only delight the anti-PowerPoint reader.

## Tufte Versus Nielsen

Not coincidentally, everything Tufte writes about PowerPoint is counter to what Jakob Nielsen has been preaching to us about writing for the web:

Write for scanability. Don't require users to read long continuous blocks of text; instead, use short paragraphs, subheadings, and bulleted lists.<sup>1</sup>

And:

[R]eading from computer screens is about 25 percent slower than reading from paper...as a result, people don't want to read a lot of text from computer screens. Therefore, you should write 50 percent less text--not just 25 percent less--because it's not only a matter of reading speed but feeling good.<sup>2</sup>

Sure, Tufte is talking about PowerPoint slides, Nielsen about web pages, but they are at opposite extremes concerning similar media. When I go to the New York Times web site, I expect the information to be highly detailed and thorough, exactly as it appears in the printed paper. I expect CNN to use many bullet points and subheads because it's headline news after all. That, and they generally report the sensationalistic results, not the context in which news stories take place, but that's a different issue. Each method fits their respective sites' audience. Nielsen's tactics are inappropriate because of the wide variety of roles web sites play to their disparate audiences.

## User-centered design

Some web sites simply aren't created for the common good if that notion implies that users be able to find a web page from a Google search and locate the answer to their question (out of context) in five seconds flat so they can leave the site forever. Who creates web sites with that intention? Tufte would also claim to be an advocate of the user (or live audience), and providing background and complete thoughts are often more important than scannability--not that the two are mutually exclusive in the first place--and the full meaning of information cannot be trimmed to a laundry list. Bullet points are good for listing items or displaying linear steps, but not for showing the complex relationship between the items. "The more intense the detail, the greater the clarity and understanding--because meaning and reasoning are contextual," writes Tufte.

Nielsen shows the following promotional writing example as the "control condition" of a usability experiment:<sup>3</sup>

Nebraska is filled with internationally recognized attractions that draw large crowds of people every year, without fail. In 1996, some of the most popular places were Fort Robinson State Park (355,000 visitors), Scotts Bluff National Monument (132,166), Arbor Lodge State Historical Park & Museum (100,000), Carhenge (86,598), Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer (60,002), and Buffalo Bill Ranch

---

State Historical Park (28,446).

The following excerpt was labeled 124% better than the control (with criteria the reader isn't privy, one of countless examples of dubious methodology in the NN/g), using "all three improvements in writing style: concise text, scannable layout, and objective language":<sup>3</sup>

In 1996, six of the most-visited places in Nebraska were:

Fort Robinson State Park  
Scotts Bluff National Monument  
Arbor Lodge State Historical Park & Museum  
Cahenge  
Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer  
Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park

While the second is undoubtedly more scannable, at what cost are we to dumb-down our data? The loss of data points, the loss of narrative and the loss of intelligence name just a few problems with the "improved" version.

While I'm on the subject, another characteristic of the Nielsen method is that his entire dogma is a reaction to sample audiences' immediate desires rather than a proactive example of setting high standards. Let's throw enough shit against the wall to see what sticks the best, tweak it, and throw some more. Imagine writing a song based on audience feedback. (It's already been done, with results as you'd expect, see Act Two). Nielsen disregards the fact that web sites have their own standards to uphold. If the New York Times followed mass appeal, there would be no more stories of Rwandan elections or goings-on in other non-tourist destinations. Fifteen-thousand word articles about politics in academics would be replaced with short articles of quick facts.

Tufte & The Columbia Accident Investigation Board

This Tuesday's report by the Columbia Accident Investigation Board has given Tufte's PP criticism wider exposure--an analysis of a Boeing slide from *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint* was excerpted on page 191 of the CAIB report (or page 15 of this PDF), faulting the Boeing presentation with an extremely deficient rate of information exchange. Tufte's makes the point that had this information been delivered in technical report accompanying the verbal presentation, important data might not have been overlooked. But it was the PowerPoint format--and the ambiguities, fragmentation and noise forced in the inherent PP style--that attributed to engineers not articulating the details. "We need serious methods of communication for serious problems."

When a reader argues that it's the individual PP user at fault for the deficiency, Tufte explains on his site that the product, not the user, is to blame:

Saying that it is a problem with the user rather than the tool blames the victims of PP (the audience,

---

the content, and the user)...This evidence [from examining thousands of PP presentations] points to inherent defects, unless one advances the entertaining hypothesis that nearly all PP users are stupid and that nearly all users of other methods are not. PP's inherent defects are a much more likely explanation. That explanation also has a direct practical prescription--abandon PP--rather than asking millions of PP users to learn tricks in a vain attempt to undo inherent problems in a slideware computer program.

As for Apple's Keynote presentation software, he makes no mention of it in his essay, but does say this on his site:

Alas the Keynote examples are as data-thin as PowerPoint. Only a few data points, no multivariate examples. Both Keynote and PP are tinker toyish.

An (ironically) abbreviated version of The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint appears in the September issue of Wired magazine as PowerPoint is Evil, juxtaposed to David Byrne's essay Learning to Love PowerPoint that promotes Byrne's new PowerPoint art DVD. But to get Tufte's full essay, I recommend sending \$7 to Graphic Press.

1Jakob Nielsen, Designing Web Usability (New Riders, 2000), 101.  
2pp. 101-102.  
3p. 105.

Other articles on Tufte and Powerpoint:

Stalin's Bullet List from Textism  
PowerPoint Remix by Aaron Schwartz  
Absolute Powerpoint from the New Yorker

Filed in Graphic Design | Comments (7)  
| TrackBack  
(0)  
<!--

---

```
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
<rdf:Description
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/08/27/a_picture_of_one_year_ago.html"
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/19"
  dc:title="A Picture of One Year Ago"
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/08/27/a_picture_of_one_year_ago.html"
  dc:subject="Ms."
  dc:description="<![CDATA[ I've been really busy lately, which is the reason for my lackadaisical
posting habits. Today, for example, is my first wedding anniversary, and since wife and I eloped one
year ago today, we celebrated with a few friends &...]]>"
  dc:creator="ss"
  dc:date="2003-08-27T10:57:10-08:00" />
</rdf:RDF>
-->
```

## A Picture of One Year Ago

Wednesday, August 27, 2003

I've been really busy lately, which is the reason for my lackadaisical posting habits. Today, for example, is my first wedding anniversary, and since wife and I eloped one year ago today, we celebrated with a few friends & family last weekend, much too late for anyone to object to our nuptials (a method I recommend to all young lovers: get the frightening I do's out of the way early, and enjoy the reception later without any nervous public speaking parts).

Soon we will go to Portugal, my wife's home, and have another celebration with friends and family on the east side of the Atlantic.

Careful readers will note that we got married on a Tuesday. Tuesday night was when everyone was free. Witnesses Mike & Christene, Reverend John and fiancée Susana and I met at the Sunset Tavern at 6PM to discuss the evening's plan over a pitcher of beer, reconvened later at the sandy bluff in Discovery Park, nice words were spoken from John, sim from Susana, I do from me, Champagne cork pop, glugglugglug, clickclick, gobbled cake with Right On! embroidered in red sugary dollops, drive to dinner, fancy tropical drink toasts, postcards sent, and it's one year later, already.

Filed in Ms. | Comments (1)

| TrackBack

(0)

<!--

```
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
<rdf:Description
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/08/22/leica_digilux_1.html"
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/17"
  dc:title="Leica Digilux 1"
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/08/22/leica_digilux_1.html"
  dc:subject="Photography"
  dc:description=" My new camera arrived in the mail early this week. It's only a few days old
and by far the best of the three digital cameras I've owned, and in my opinion, the best of any
camera in its..."
  dc:creator="ss"
```

---

dc:date="2003-08-22T11:36:27-08:00" />  
</rdf:RDF>  
-->

## Leica Digilux 1

Friday, August 22, 2003

My new camera arrived in the mail early this week. It's only a few days old and by far the best of the three digital cameras I've owned, and in my opinion, the best of any camera in its class. However, I already know that as soon as there's a substantially better one, preferably one made by Leica, the Digilux 1 will be pushed to the backburner.

First, the good points

It's amazingly fast. With manual focus, it takes the picture when the shutter release is pushed. This is unheard of in digital cameras in this price range making it a true "reportage" camera.

Best automatic exposure of any sub-\$1000 digital camera.

Best color of any sub-\$1000 digital camera.

Manual focus with an actual focus ring.

Placement of controls and UI make sense and was designed more like a traditional camera.

Standard flash hot-shoe.

It's a beautiful-looking camera. And it's a Leica.

When everything's set to auto, it just takes good pictures and is fast enough to capture the moment.

When set to manual focus, manual shutter speed and manual aperture, the photographer has total control.

What I'd like to see in the Digilux 2

A removable lens format to allow wide angle and telephoto fixed-length lenses.

A focus ring with increments on the lens. Right now you can't look at the focus ring and set it for 8 feet. You have to use the viewfinder or digital display to see when it's in focus.

F-stop metering on the lens. The aperture is a function of the lens, and that's where the control belongs.

Faster image writing. Even though it takes the picture instantaneously (at least with manual focus; a fraction of a second wait with auto-focus), the next shot is delayed for a few seconds while writing the image. Times vary depending on resolution and the size and quality of the card used.

More pixels. Why not 10 megapixels like the new Leica DIGITAL-MODUL-R?

Non-retractable lenses. Right now the camera takes a little more than a second to retract the lens when first switched on. Why not turn the camera on, remove the lens cap, and start shooting?

Better audio reporting -- preferably some kind of clicking mimicking an analog camera for when shutter is released, or for long exposures, when the shutter opens and closes. With volume control.

Some people complain about the camera's physical size, yet it's smaller than a Pentax K-1000 with lens. I have no complaint here and have no reservations taking the camera with me everywhere I go.

---

Filed in Photography | Comments (4)

| TrackBack

(0)

<!--

```
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
```

```
<rdf:Description
```

```
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/08/19/modern_dog.html"
```

```
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/12"
```

```
  dc:title="Modern Dog"
```

```
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/08/19/modern_dog.html"
```

```
  dc:subject="Graphic Design"
```

```
  dc:description=" I just received my Modern Dog playing cards (2nd edition) in today's mail.
Each card has a different Modern Dog poster from 1995-2001. The pair's style has been
influential for years, but they even have a sense of humor..."
```

```
  dc:creator="ss"
```

```
  dc:date="2003-08-19T18:18:45-08:00" />
```

```
</rdf:RDF>
```

```
-->
```

## Modern Dog

Tuesday, August 19, 2003

I just received my Modern Dog playing cards (2nd edition) in today's mail. Each card has a different Modern Dog poster from 1995-2001. The pair's style has been influential for years, but they even have a sense of humor in their mail packaging, as seen above.

Filed in Graphic Design | Comments (1)

| TrackBack

(0)

<!--

```
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
```

```
<rdf:Description
```

```
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/08/08/google_holes.html"
```

```
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/8"
```

```
  dc:title="Google Holes"
```

```
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/08/08/google_holes.html"
```

```
  dc:subject="The Web"
```

```
  dc:description=" Reading articles like these always remind me of the Winer quote, "If you want to
be in Google, you gotta be on the Web." Google is beginning to have a subtle, but noticeable effect on
research. More and more..."
```

```
  dc:creator="ss"
```

```
  dc:date="2003-08-08T12:14:53-08:00" />
```

```
</rdf:RDF>
```

```
-->
```

---

## Google Holes

Friday, August 8, 2003

Reading articles like these always remind me of the Winer quote, "If you want to be in Google, you gotta be on the Web."

Google is beginning to have a subtle, but noticeable effect on research. More and more scholarly publications are putting up their issues in PDF format, which Google indexes as though they were traditional Web pages. But almost no one is publishing entire books online in PDF form. So, when you're doing research online, Google is implicitly pushing you toward information stored in articles and away from information stored in books. Assuming this practice continues, and assuming that Google continues to grow in influence, we may find ourselves in a world where, if you want to get an idea into circulation, you're better off publishing a PDF file on the Web than landing a book deal.

Of course any researcher who employs Google as his main tool is not conducting serious research. For real research, a trip to a good library is still required. But the quote subtly suggests the distinction between merely getting an idea into circulation (via the web, without a large marketing budget) versus trying to keep your media or publishing company profitable. It's hard to do both. Amazon is attempting a similar strategy by planning to make the full texts of books available to user searches, but limiting the amount of text accessible to the user.

Now take search topics where users who are feeling lucky on Google are directed to Contact Sheet, however irrelevant (in Kottke fashion):

A selection of close seconds and other notables:

All the smuttiness that Google tracks and directs over here (there's a lot more, from looking through the dregs of referral logs) makes me feel like a politician who's been quoted grossly out of context.

Filed in The Web | Comments (0)

| TrackBack

(0)

<!--

```
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
```

```
<rdf:Description
```

```
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/08/07/woody_allens_typeface.html"
```

```
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/9"
```

```
  dc:title="Woody Allen's Typeface"
```

```
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/08/07/woody_allens_typeface.html"
```

```
  dc:subject="Typography"
```

```
  dc:description=" Yesterday Dave Reidy of the Coudal Partners wrote: With a new Woody Allen
```

---

film on its way, thoughts turn to his signature typeface, and the fact that none of us know what the hell it is. We think it's...

```
dc:creator="ss"  
dc:date="2003-08-07T13:13:11-08:00" />  
</rdf:RDF>  
-->
```

## Woody Allen's Typeface

Thursday, August 7, 2003

Yesterday Dave Reidy of the Coudal Partners wrote:

With a new Woody Allen film on its way, thoughts turn to his signature typeface, and the fact that none of us know what the hell it is. We think it's this one. If you know differently, let us know.

I'd guessed that it was this one instead, at least for some of his late 70's/early 80's films. But since I'm such a big fan of his movies, I decided to take a closer look. I took all ten of the Woody Allen DVDs that I own and captured the title screens. As often as I've watched them, I was surprised to learn that his signature Windsor wasn't used until Annie Hall then abandoned for two films, and that no titles were used whatsoever in Manhattan -- just scenes of New York over his magnificent opening monologue. Seeing the titles side by side shows the nuances of using different studios and designers throughout the years, even if the base font family remained unchanged for 20+ years. Take a look at Ten Woody Allen Title Screens

Filed in Film, Typography | Comments (14)

| TrackBack

(0)

<!--

```
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"  
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"  
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
```

```
<rdf:Description
```

```
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/08/06/printed_web_gallery.html"
```

```
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/11"
```

```
  dc:title="Printed Web Gallery"
```

```
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/08/06/printed_web_gallery.html"
```

```
  dc:subject="The Web"
```

```
  dc:description="For years I've kept manilla folders full of examples of great web design on  
my desk. Anytime I see a site that illustrates a new way of designing something I might be working  
on I'll print it out so I..."
```

```
  dc:creator="ss"
```

```
  dc:date="2003-08-06T15:51:21-08:00" />
```

```
</rdf:RDF>
```

```
-->
```

---

## Printed Web Gallery

Wednesday, August 6, 2003

For years I've kept manilla folders full of examples of great web design on my desk. Anytime I see a site that illustrates a new way of designing something I might be working on I'll print it out so I can easily refer to it and flip through the stack of pages. It's so much easier than pulling up screenshots or organizing bookmarks. It's like creating my own custom issue of Communication Arts.

To print these web pages in the most accurate manner, I usually take a screenshot of the site, import it into Photoshop, upsample to 300 dpi, reduce to 8"x10", and print it on HP Everyday Photo Paper, Matte (around \$.14 a sheet in 100 sheet packages). Flipping through this folder is the best way for me to quickly brainstorm about ideas, navigation, organization, etc. Sometimes I'll stick post-it notes on the print-outs as a reminder of what struck me about a particular site.

Lately I've been printing out sites of large organizations that incorporate a top universal nav bar (bbc.com & microsoft sites) that let users quickly navigate to the main areas within a large organization but have restrained color and styling so the nav bar can be applied to any microsite within the organization. Currently, these examples can be found near the beginning of the manilla folder.

If I'm solely interested in the content of the page, I'll usually skip the details above and send it to the laserjet printer by hitting Cntrl-P from the browser. Not infrequently I'm disappointed to see that some pertinent bit of the content ran off the right side of the page by inadequate printing capabilities of the browser. In 2003, ten years since the first browser was introduced, you'd think the major browsers would have the simple task of printing down pat, but unfortunately I have to resort to the above method when I want an exact representation of what's on my screen.

Filed in [The Web](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

| [TrackBack](#)

(0)

## NN/g: Return on Investment

Tuesday, August 5, 2003

A recent Boxes and Arrows article illuminates some shortcomings of Nielsen/Norman Group methodologies found in their report Usability Return on Investment. It's about time someone shed a critical light on their activities. While they preach user-centeredness, they have a very NN/g-centered view of usability. Both principles in the firm, Jakob Nielsen and Donald Norman, excel in overstating the obvious, especially in book form where they have plenty of room to repeat their assertions until the reader is numbed into submission. I read Nielsen's column with the same skepticism I apply to any other columnist--he's far too opinionated and commanding to be taken too seriously. (I also noticed a wee shift in Nielsen's once-scathing opinion of Flash after Macromedia paid him large sums of money for his consulting work, an embarrassment for both parties, in my opinion). Beyond that, their methods for drawing broad conclusions are dubious and often lazy, as seen in this intelligent review.

Filed in [The Web](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#)

## Coast

Monday, August 4, 2003

We took the camera to the ocean yesterday. Here are some of our discoveries.

---

This is where they make all those trees that you see around the Northwest. These trees need to have their branches and leaves appended and they'll soon be ready to plant.

Fisherman branding.

Chainsaw carving in Westport.

Oceanside grass.

Filed in Photography | Comments (0)

## Research & Meetup.com

Wednesday, July 30, 2003

I always enjoy the research before the design phase starts. It's a time when ideals are formed, before the technical and budgetary restrictions of the project have been assigned. Just like college is the idealistic time before your career makes you cynical about the compromises that ensue in the real world, the research is the Ralph Nader while the implementation is the Al Gore.

While performing some community research for a project at work I recently dug into Meetup.com, a site that enjoyed a publicity boost from Howard Dean's grassroot supporters and the media coverage that followed. There's also recent blogger linkage due to new Movable Type meetups.

Before Dean's boon, I'd gone there to look for a Portuguese community in Seattle. There are interested people from Brazil and Portugal and those eager to meet with native speakers, but there's little to do on the site other than sign up for the next potential meeting. There's no way to see if they've met in the past or to exchange messages with others signed up on the list. How amazingly frustrating -- Meetup offers no way to correspond with users, individually or en masse, to establish a rapport before walking blindly into a room of strangers. You can see them there, but can't contact

---

them. This is particularly problematic when no one person wants to step up to be the host. Instead, some users post links in their profiles to other Yahoo forums and external sites--a very haphazard way of maintaining user interest.

There could also be better user profiles--why not show what other meetups users belong to, if they choose to share; show agendas and reports of last meetings including number of participants, and if the meeting has a serious agenda, what was accomplished. I can see that Meetup is about real-life meetings, but to have restricted contact with other members until the meeting seems to be a leap that many people aren't willing to take.

Filed in The Web | Comments (3)

## City Scene

Saturday, July 26, 2003

Midday, downtown, a woman is walking down the street. A man in a 1980s Cadillac drives up slowly, pulls over and yells to the woman in a thick Russian accent, "That looks like the ass of my ex-wife. Ex-wife, get in the car." She smiles, rolls her eyes, gets in the car.

Filed in Overheard | Comments (1)

```
<!--
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
<rdf:Description
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/07/23/friendly_urls_site_maintenance.html"
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/10"
  dc:title="<![CDATA[Friendly URLs & Site Maintenance]]>"
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/07/23/friendly_urls_site_maintenance.html"
  dc:subject="Web Design"
  dc:description="I recently led an effort at work to make our URL structure more logical. The
purpose was to allow our URLs to offer more information about the linked page before users clicked
and also to reflect the site structure through..."
  dc:creator="ss"
  dc:date="2003-07-23T16:44:18-08:00" />
</rdf:RDF>
-->
```

## Friendly URLs & Site Maintenance

Wednesday, July 23, 2003

I recently led an effort at work to make our URL structure more logical. The purpose was to allow our URLs to offer more information about the linked page before users clicked and also to reflect the site structure through the URLs. In usability testing months ago I noticed that some users would click on the logo to return to the homepage--a common enough behavior--but were unsure this actually returned them to the homepage. The uncertainty was due, understandably, to the fact that the homepage URL wasn't a simple protocol and domain (<http://domain.com>), but instead had a lot of unnecessary key-value gobbledygook that followed. Even typing in the simple homepage URL would redirect to this unfriendly URL. This was clearly broken, and there was no evidence as strong as watching this same uncertainty occur again and again in each users' own idiosyncratic way.

In an effort to practice what I preach, last night I did some housecleaning on Contact Sheet. First, I changed the permalink filenames into meaningful, readable slugs. Rather than using an arbitrary

---

number such as 0000117.html, the filename should reveal easy-to-associate clues about the content, like friendly\_urls\_site\_maintenance.html. This is done in Movable Type by using the "dirify" option which loosely turns the entry title into the file name.

Next, I organized the article directory structure by date to make it easier to browse down a level and view entries by day or month. I'm guessing I'm not the only one that edits URLs in the address bar as a shortcut to navigation. MT doesn't easily allow you to view by year and that's fairly useless anyway, so it bumps you down to the complete archives if you try to view by year. Including the date in the directory structure or slug also tells the user how timely a piece of content is without having to click.

These changes likely duplicated my complete set of RSS entries in most RSS readers since it changed all entries' permalinks. The old URLs will still work, they just won't be updated with comments that are added after the changes were made last night. Had I known how to set these features up from the beginning I would have--changing URLs of content is never a good thing. If this were a professional revenue-generating site, I would insist on redirects. It is not, and I offer my sympathy.

What does any of this have to do with design? Well, it has little to do with graphic design and everything to do with information design. If users know any incremental information about a link, especially when obscurely referenced in an embedded fashion like so, they'll be that much more likely to find some relevance and click. (Notice the hypocrisy in the last Jakob Nielsen link, even though he talks about domain names and not complete URLs as claimed.) In my case, users will know the date and approximate title of the linked entry in Contact Sheet.

#### Update

To configure Movable Type like I've described above, you can manipulate the directory structure by choosing Weblog Config, then Archiving, and make sure the boxes are checked next to Individual, Daily & Monthly. Then fill in the Archive File Template field like so:

Individual: <\$MTArchiveDate format=\"% Y/%m/%d\"\$><\$MTEntryTitle dirify=\"1\"\$>.html  
Daily: <\$MTArchiveDate format=\"% Y/%m/%d/index.html\"\$>  
Monthly: <\$MTArchiveDate format=\"% Y/%m/index.html\"\$>

Filed in Web Design | Comments (15)

| TrackBack

(0)

## White House E-Mail

Friday, July 18, 2003

Instead of freely accepting e-mails like every other address, you now must state whether you agree or disagree with President Bush, in addition to completing steps on nine pages of a complex form before sending an electronic mail (now called a courriel in France, perhaps getting back for our "freedom fries" debacle) to the White House, reports the NY Times. The URL is down this A.M.

But even Jakob Nielsen has jumped in for some easy press, "It's probably designed deliberately to cut down on their e-mail."

Filed in The Web | Comments (1)

## What they're saying...

Friday, July 18, 2003

---

They're talking about my wife. That's her, the leverager.

We're happy to have Account Executive Susana Cascais on our team, not only because she's fluent in five languages, including her native Portuguese, but because she's versed in communicating our clients' brands effectively in all media. While working for worldwide agencies in Portugal for eight years, Susana's strategic planning and guidance helped leverage such brands as Sony Playstation, Seagrams, Parmalat, Nivea, and Mercedes Benz. She also helped her agency win a Gold Lion in Cannes. Now, in addition to providing marketing expertise to clients like Microsoft Business Solutions, Susana will be a big help when it comes to ordering from foreign menus.

Filed in Ms. | Comments (0)

```
<!--
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
<rdf:Description
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/07/17/the_breeze_of_transformation.html"
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/14"
  dc:title="The Breeze of Transformation"
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/07/17/the_breeze_of_transformation.html"
  dc:subject="Technology"
  dc:description=" The reading of many excellent design blogs in the last six months has made me
curious once again about what was going on over in Mac-land, something that happens every few
years. I&apos;ve found that the reasons I&apos;ve been..."
  dc:creator="ss"
  dc:date="2003-07-17T10:42:39-08:00" />
</rdf:RDF>
-->
```

## The Breeze of Transformation

Thursday, July 17, 2003

The reading of many excellent design blogs in the last six months has made me curious once again about what was going on over in Mac-land, something that happens every few years. I've found that the reasons I've been turned off to the Mac in the past are, in descending order:

An excruciatingly bad experience at my first design job where I had to use an outdated PowerPC that crashed ten times a day.

Status quo: My current software & skill set are honed for the PC. A lot of the Mac interface seems like it's sacrificed far too much function for form (e.g., you often have to use the mouse instead of tabbing through forms, unless third-party software is installed).

I like to use what users use. Since the majority of my work is for the web, I'd always lived by the belief that you should experience the site the same way your users do, to optimize your work for that common platform/browser combination. The flip side is that when you use the minority product, you're catching all the other bugs no one else at work sees.

Expense. Any way you slice it, the Mac is more expensive.

XP is as good as OS X. This almost seems like an odd time to use the Mac when virtually every tool the graphic designer needs is available for Windows. My limited amount of print work never requires the mention of a Mac. And for the software design cycles, Windows is now far more mature than OS

---

X.

Mac user smugness. I've always been turned off by the holier-than-thou attitude (and I've only seen it from the Mac side, since I've always sat on the Windows side). I've never been that religious about my OS choice, or cared enough to flame the opposing camp. After all, it's the finished work that counts. But even Apple introduces proprietary audio formats, competes against its closest allies, awards outrageous bonuses to its billionaire CEO. The difference is, Apple outspends marketing dollars (per revenue) to put a pretty face on an otherwise typical corporate machine.

But there are many valid reasons to re-evaluate my OS use:

However corporate, Apple is not Microsoft, the most tactless software company in existence (except for maybe one other).

Mac OS X uses UNIX. The chances of me re-evaluating OS 9 were pretty slim. But now, with all of those underlying UNIX features...

Most designers use it... what am I missing here?

In typical fashion, I'm jumping on the bandwagon years after it first breezed by. I got my hands on an old G4 tower, made a trip to the Bellevue Apple Store to buy another stick o' RAM, and promptly installed Jaguar, Apple Developer Tools and FINK. So far, I like it. It's the same Mhz/RAM as my XP machine, but for some reason it's much slower. I'm quite sick of staring at that rainbow-pinwheel-hourglass while the computer thinks about my last click.

As I already mentioned, my biggest complaint at this early writing is the reliance on the god damn mouse. Alright, Apple may have been the first to introduce widespread mouse use, but do we have to use it for every dialogue window?

I'm also not impressed by the brushed metal or photo-realistic icons. I'm partial to more digitized icons (when designing for the screen, I enjoy working on a pixel level, as opposed to scalable photo icons) and prefer a desktop that actually has less visual personality, so there's less conflict with the work you're actually doing. And I still find it hard to tell what applications I have open. But many of these complaints will fade as I familiarize myself more and start using design tools on OS X to do real work.

Filed in Technology | Comments (9)

| TrackBack

(0)

<!--

```
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
```

```
<rdf:Description
```

```
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/07/11/porq_the_other_fake_meat.html"
```

```
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/15"
```

```
  dc:title="Porq: The Other Fake Meat"
```

```
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/07/11/porq_the_other_fake_meat.html"
```

---

```
dc:subject="Real Life"
dc:description=" I became a vegetarian twelve years ago, on July 11, 1991. In this time I've noticed a thing or two about vegetarians and their vegetarianism. There seems to be a cycle that many vegetarians go through in their attitudes..."
dc:creator="ss"
dc:date="2003-07-11T11:31:00-08:00" />
</rdf:RDF>
-->
```

## Porq: The Other Fake Meat

Friday, July 11, 2003

I became a vegetarian twelve years ago, on July 11, 1991. In this time I've noticed a thing or two about vegetarians and their vegetarianism. There seems to be a cycle that many vegetarians go through in their attitudes towards their chosen lifestyle. For those who stick with it over the long haul, it goes something like this:

Victims of the Totalitarian Regime -- Once the vegetarian finally makes the commitment he is immediately repulsed by anyone who eats meat, for they are all part of the fascist machine. Vegetarian forgets he was eating meat just three weeks ago. This is a touchy period where the vegetarian constantly and combatively reassures himself that his decision was worth it.

Thanks, But No Thanks -- Vegetarian grows more comfortable with his choice, but could do without the special treatment, as if he were a down with a case of gout, on a restricted diet fighting for life when family members point out on restaurant menus, with the best of intentions, "Oh, look, here's something that you can eat. Did you see the Bombay Burrito? It's vegetarian." The vegetarian gently reminds all present for the 45th time that he can eat anything he likes, but chooses not to, thank you very much.

Porq: The Other Fake Meat -- Vegetarian misses the old days and acts on sentimental childhood memories of the State Fair. Attend barbecues with fake animal parts. Buys vegetarian quorn dogs. Naysayers point out the hypocrisy; vegetarian eats what he wants, like everyone else.

Politically Tired -- Vegetarian grows tired of engaging in political discussions regarding his choice, regarding it as a personal matter. "But God designed us to eat meat" prodding no longer elicits a two hour argument from the vegetarian [see #1].

Long Haul -- Vegetarian finds peace with his decision. He fine tunes his outlook, somewhere between veganism and meat-eating, no longer a vegetarian to upholding principles or forge an identity by choosing particular foods over others. Vegetarian may be accepting of chicken stock, picking the pepperoni off the pizza, as long as the food doesn't taste like meat. Other middle ground includes eating seafood (merely insects of the deep, after all) and becoming a Vegequarian or a Catholic Vegetarian. Strict vegans point out the hypocrisy; vegetarian eats what he wants, like everyone else.

Filed in Real Life | Comments (10)

| TrackBack

(0)

<!--

```
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"
xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">
```

---

```
<rdf:Description
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/07/10/tour_de_web.html"
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/16"
  dc:title="Tour de Web"
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/07/10/tour_de_web.html"
  dc:subject="The Web"
  dc:description=" Since the beginning of GW's reign, and especially throughout the war,
I've been hesitant to promote my nationality in any form. But for three weeks in July I
can't help but cheer for the Americans in the Tour de..."
  dc:creator="ss"
  dc:date="2003-07-10T16:16:23-08:00" />
</rdf:RDF>
-->
```

## Tour de Web

Thursday, July 10, 2003

Since the beginning of GW's reign, and especially throughout the war, I've been hesitant to promote my nationality in any form. But for three weeks in July I can't help but cheer for the Americans in the Tour de France. I'm not much of a sports fan, but cycling is different. It mixes sheer endurance of the individual with complex team strategies (and occasional in-team rivalries that Greg LeMond encountered in 1985-86), and all the drama, gusto and gossip of a major European sporting event.

And cycling generally avoids the monetary hoopla and commercialism that has infected other mainstream sports. Cycling teams don't coerce cities into spending billions on fancy stadiums -- it welcomes everyone that wants to watch with a free ticket to the sidelines, especially the fans who dress up in bunny costumes and run alongside their favorite riders on the slow, grueling climbs. Nothing is off limits, and fan participation has remained a significant (if not dangerous) part of the event.

As someone who doesn't subscribe to cable television I feed my fancy by rolling out of bed and reading the days' race reports, with the stage freshly finished when I wake up in Pacific Time each morning. Here are some of the sites I visit to get my fix.

Canal Le Tour -- The official site of the Tour de France is the best site for comprehensive Tour standings. And there are a lot of them -- General Classification (overall standings) and stage standings for individual, team and five categories. But the 14 daily results are organized so it's easy to find who won the stage and how Lance is doing in the overall (very well, thanks to a magnificent performance by the Posties in the team time trial on Wednesday) and a plethora of other data. The race map with detailed elevation profiles is available in static and Flash versions (the latter only in French). If I woke up early enough I could also read the play-by-play with live updates every few minutes.

New York Times -- the Times, my primary general purpose news source, has a Tour page that unnecessarily pops up the Interactive Tour page everytime you navigate there. I promptly close it because it's the typical Flash nightmare -- slow to realize mouse clicks, poor proprietary navigation, etc. But the coverage by Samuel Abt and other Times' reporters contains excellent writing and covers human interest aspects of the tour such as what it's like to be waiting on the sidelines and how the TV coverage works.

---

VeloNews -- The gold standard of pro cycling rags, VeloNews has the most comprehensive Tour coverage without needing to explain the basics for a mainstream audience, and no fancy interactive fluff needed to drum up interest -- if you're there, you already love cycling. Articles are arranged by stage so it's easy to keep track of where you left off (something I have a hard time doing with the NYT). VeloNews also has writing contracts with USPS trainer Chris Carmichael and several riders. Nothing technologically fancy, just writing about bike racing.

ESPN -- A leading site in ball-centered sports, ESPN built out its Tour de France site to appeal to the general sports enthusiast. For some reason, the title of the page reads "ESPN - Olympic Sports - Tour de France" -- cycling evidently always falls under olympic sports on the site (aren't basketball, baseball, tennis and hockey also olympic sports?). The coverage is thin -- in fact I hadn't even thought to visit the ESPN site until I started writing this entry. The layout is good, but the updates are slow to arrive -- nothing more than the statistical results for most stages. However, the map interactivity is among the best and has a nice elevation profile overlay, but only on mountain stages where it matters most. It's the quickest to respond to clicks since it's not bloated with features. I applaud it for its simplicity. And ESPN.com is also XHTML compliant.

Bicycling Magazine -- the be-all of bicycling magazines, Bicycling is known as a practical knowledge bicycling magazine for those who ride. It fits real Tour coverage between articles like 13 Rides Tough Enough to Change Your Life and The Best Champagne to Drink During the Tour de France. Has all the expected race results, interesting facts and contributing writers. Like VeloNews, their tour map is plain HTML on a regular page which makes it the easiest to read. But there's something so 1997 about this site that doesn't appeal to me.

I've noticed over the years that all cycling becomes more pleasureable when the tour is underway. When you can link each hill on your commute to work with a particular Tour climb, you just go faster and feel better. While the Postal Service is climbing up Alp d' Huez on Sunday, I'll be doing my final training ride for RAMROD, a 155 mile ride around Mt. Rainier on July 31st, where I'm sure I'll have the tour in mind plenty.

Filed in The Web | Comments (1)  
| TrackBack  
(0)

## Adobe-Apple Tiff

Thursday, July 10, 2003

Adobe wrote in March on a since removed page that it prefers PCs for Photoshop, After Effects and Illustrator, showing that on "equal" machines, the PC outperformed the Mac. Apple responded and stood by their original claim that the Mac is faster.

Then on Monday Adobe announced that they're dropping Premiere for the Mac. This is major news, but justified since Apple continues to compete against its most loyal software vendors. Final Cut Pro being Mac's video editing program that competes with Premiere and the new Font Book usurping Suitcase (as problematic as Suitcase has been), being two of the most recent examples. It's only going to make inter-office file-trading harder, compatibility issues more frustrating. This is not a Mac vs. Windows argument -- I simply don't want to live in a world where there's an Adobe Photoshop (PSD) format and a Mac photo-editing format, a Quark format and a Mac layout format. OS/2 lost the desktop market because it wasn't interoperable with the status quo. Thinking too differently is going to make the Mac even more obscure. This isn't a new argument of course, but this week's Premiere announcement is disappointing and adds new fodder for the "Apple is dead" pundits.

## destination: India

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

An office-wide e-mail that was just sent out:

Good afternoon, there was a package left in the outgoing mail bin on the 15th floor, yesterday 7/08/03. Additional information is needed in order to ship this package. Please see the mailroom manager for additional information.

recipients name: Gandhi M

destination: India

They evidently need the recipient's last name. If it was "Zsa Zsa, Malibu," I could understand.

## Freshly Vacationed

Tuesday, July 8, 2003

We just returned from a tromp through the Midwest paying visits to friends and relatives sorely missed. Our final evening treated us with a fierce thunderstorm -- blowing down trees and knocking out power lines -- that put the fireworks displays to shame.

The trip was a reminder of how distant I am from the place I grew up, from the thick humidity and stifling temperature extremes, ridiculously large trucks, smeared fireflies on windshields and the constant chirping of locusts that you forget are there until they're not. Also, the ham that comes on a "vegetarian" pizza (how charming), the mass dumping of perfectly good drinking water on imported grass to keep it green, chatty waitressing, and especially, the wide open landscapes of the great plains that make you feel claustrophobic when you return to the Northwest, where there's a tree sticking in your face every time you turn around. I miss it all, but would never want it back.

## Design School Web Sites

Tuesday, July 1, 2003

Looking at graduate design school programs, I've been surprised by all of the nasty web sites. In the bigger liberal arts schools, it's hard enough just to find the design program. Is it within the Art department? Is it a separate college? Should I take this graduate programs link?

---

I'm particularly surprised with the major schools with long histories that specialize in design showing such a bad face online. In no particular order, here are some of my experiences, with RISD coming out well ahead of the pack.

University of Washington -- There is a small amount of information on each of many separate pages. If you want to print the curriculum, for example, you end up printing 25 pages that are 1/5 filled.

Yale -- nearly impossible to find the design program either by navigation or search. The scant material that is available online is optimized for neither on screen nor printed viewing.

Cranbrook -- this thing is a train wreck and an embarrassment to the school. A progression of pop-ups give you no sense of place. After ten minutes of frustration I couldn't find out if they even have a graduate program. Impossible to navigate; an utter failure in design.

University of Cincinnati -- for a large liberal arts school, this design program was the easiest to find within the school's bigger web site. When you dig deep enough, you get on-screen PDFs. Great for printing, but there should be another layer optimized for the web. Also, the School of Design microsite doesn't give you the sense that this has been a substantial player in the history of American graphic design, which it has.

RISD -- the best web experience of any I tried -- from the beginning the visitor gets the sense that this is a serious design institution. I have a few nits about the resized pop-up window (why can't they design a site that doesn't take over my browser?). All information I needed was well-optimized for web and print reading.

CalArts -- An attractive, straightforward design that is made for the web. Easy to navigate and it does a good job of showcasing the school's strengths. That is, until you get to the Design School microsite which is a dizzying Flash tornado that tells you nothing. The Curriculum link doesn't even work.

Filed in Graphic Design | Comments (2)

## House Ownership & the Seattle Beautification Society

Friday, June 27, 2003

After six months in the new house, I came home yesterday to find a letter from the City of Seattle Department of Design, Construction and Land Use that read:

A City of Seattle inspector has noted that violations of local ordinances exist on the premises identified above.

To avoid receiving a formal "Notice of Violation" which may carry penalties of \$15 to \$75 per day, please take action to correct the violation(s) checked below.

x Cut and remove any vegetation constituting a fire, health or safety hazard

x Cut and remove any vegetation on the property or the adjacent parking strips which overhangs any public sidewalk within 8 feet of the ground.

---

You can't tell from the perspective of their enclosed photo, but my 6'3" frame had to jump to reach those branches. My guess is that a nosy neighbor reported the folks across the street (you know, the ones with waist-high weeds, two shopping carts parked in the front yard with a potpourri of empties scattered around the premises, who yell at each other from two feet away while sucking down longnecks -- so unsophisticated, I mean really) and while the city was out on their cleanup crusade, reveled in our low-hanging fruit, so to speak.

Or it may have been that the city was had grown accustomed to citing our residence for petty violations -- before our ownership -- for noise disturbances and the like. When wife & I first looked at the house, we loved it for its charm and spaciousness, but it was rough around the edges and required a lot of maintenance, work that we've only scratched upon so far. There were a lot of guitars and Marshall stacks and soundboards throughout the house, nothing out of the ordinary for this city. We made an offer that afternoon.

### The Name-Dropping Part of the Story

The next day our real-estate agent called back to say the offer was accepted, and by the way, the current owner is Dan Peters, the drummer of Mudhoney (and former fill-in drummer for Nirvana). So that explained the collection of recording equipment in the basement, the Alice Cooper doll in the bathtub, the Touch Me, I'm Sick sticker on the fridge. They were selling after ten years in the house. On a later visit, I mentioned to Dan that I'd seen his band play in Omaha about eight or nine years ago. "At the bowling alley?" "Yes." Wife & I laughed at the coincidence and fancied images of past Northwest punk rocker parties in our house with Eddie Vedder stumbling down the uneven stairs, Kurt & Courtney bickering on the porch, Chris Cornell scarfing down potato chips, leaning on the kitchen counter. But no such evidence arose. All that's left is a well-insulated practice room in the basement where you can scream and never be heard.

So last night I trimmed back the tree to appease the Inspector and any nine-foot pedestrians who walk up our street. While making our mayor proud, I noticed those neighbors had finally harvested the field of wheat they'd been growing in the front yard all spring. How irritating it is to be judged. How even more disparaging it is to judge. These thoughts never crossed my mind when I rented. Each month I paid my rent, and thought about the next place I was going to live.

Filed in Seattle | Comments (1)

## A Friendly Reminder

Thursday, June 26, 2003

When rummaging through a drawer I came across this gift a previous neighbor left on my car window. For all these months I've been trying to figure out what the torn part said. "There is no food?" "There is nothing more absurd?" Or maybe, "There is no extra space behind my big fucking SUV for your little economical turd."

---

Filed in Overheard | Comments (4)

## Safari 1.0 & Browser Compliance

Monday, June 23, 2003

Safari 1.0 was released for the Mac today, which marks the first General Announcement of an Apple-made web browser. Some visitors (thanks and thanks) had reported a major bug in the way Contact Sheet's homepage was rendered in the previous Safari Beta -- completely lacking a vertical scrollbar.

With the 1.0 announcement I thought I'd take the time to investigate the problem, seeing how my bug reports to Safari went unanswered (the bug still appears in 1.0). I looked at my stylesheets, then HTML, and found the problem with a bit of JavaScript, specifically a document.write method to detect the user's screen size that caused the scrollbar to disappear -- clearly a Safari bug. I altered the placement of the code slightly and the scrollbar now appears.

I didn't hop on this problem when it was first brought to my attention because (a) Safari is a beta browser (b) since I now sport XHTML and CSS validity, it was likely to be a browser bug (see a) and (c) only 1% - 2% of the daily users use Safari -- although this is likely to increase with the 1.0 release, and with my bug workaround in place.

Which begs the question, at what point should web designers care about site/browser compatibility? Is it purely about the percentage of users? Compliance with web standards? At most places I've worked it seems that folks use the sheer volumes when creating policy. But if "only" 1% of your users are viewing with Netscape, 1% of a million are a lot of people viewing a potentially imperfect site. With the browser market pie chart becoming more fragmented -- a good thing, mind you -- designers will have to consciously draw the line somewhere. And we already do with old versions.

So, what are your browser compliance criteria?

Filed in The Web | Comments (5)

## Photography

Thursday, June 19, 2003

Some photo collections I've been enjoying lately:

The Cross Atlantic Report (CAR) just released their May photos. This is a great idea, and if and when I move to Portugal, I wouldn't mind participating. One nit: the photos are too small.

Anything and Everything: a collection of Lomo photographs. Nice display mechanism (and good use of Flash, except you can't refer to a photograph by its URL).

The 800x600 Project, where the photographer picks a subject, selects 64 photos, and crams them into an 800x600 grid. My favorite is 64 shots of my workhorse bicycle.

A few old Adam Curry photographs (one of the original MTV VJs for you American-pop-culture-illiterate folk)

And don't forget the 10 Golden Rules of Lomography that all farm league photographers should review every now and again (well-designed site, too!)

Filed in Photography | Comments (0)

---

## The Web Is Not PDF

Tuesday, June 17, 2003

This weekend I searched unsuccessfully for a Movable Type plug-in that would create a PDF version of Contact Sheet. We know full well that The Web Is Not Print, and even more that Print Is Not the Web (thanks to Dave S. for the reminder). With that in mind, I hacked together my own PHP script bringing you the short history of Contact Sheet in PDF.

The links are gone, the graphics are gone, every bit of formatting is gone making it one bland robotic document. I'm not in the business of creating an HTML to PDF converter, so I threw the CSS out with the bathwater. This is pure text and line breaks, baby.

So does this have any useful purpose? It's good for saving a simple copy of your weblog, or packaging your blog into one portable file. It's great for printing out your blog in one fell swoop to save for the year when harddrives are obsolete. I've come across great sites wishing there was one PDF that I could grab, saving me the pain of motion-sickness reading that much text on screen.

(Interestingly, two proponents of web standards that I've read recently each relate their standardization concerns to current technology becoming obsolete.

In the above Owen Brigg's design rant:

Just like much of NASA's 1976 Viking data. NASA can no longer read the format those tapes are in. Researchers are having to review that Mars data by digging through paper print-outs that older scientist hadn't thrown away.

Jeffrey Zeldman says:

My studio was built around an Akai 12-track, an excellent machine, but with a proprietary format... A year into it, Akai changed their tape format. My master tapes became museum pieces. Then the machine broke down and I couldn't easily arrange repairs or get parts. This experience would later make me highly receptive to the advantages of common technological standards, as in Web standards.

...but what we really need are less standards and more paper printouts!)

Formatting aside, the main stink is that links don't work (at least in the printed version, of course), severely limiting the context of many blogs.

I used the R&OS PDF classes, but there are a lot more free PHP-PDF tools available, some with XML

---

capabilities that might be a better way to retain more of the styles and formatting. For this example, I created a new MT template, stripped out all the HTML, and fed it to the PHP script which was an altered version of the sample that came with the package.

If others are interested I'll make it available, once I peel away the duct tape and rubber bands holding it together. But I said it before and I'll say it again: it ain't pretty.

Filed in [Weblogs](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#)

## Available Domains

Monday, June 16, 2003

I wrote a quick little script and let it go for ~36 hours to find out that these are the only alpha-numeric two-letter domains available in the .com .net .org suffixes according to the Internic Whois Directory:

75.org  
ac.org  
fs.org  
h9.org  
mw.org

nq.org  
o7.org  
qd.org  
yo.org  
z9.org

However, most registrars won't let you register two-letter .org domains anymore to comply with a new ICANN/PIR restriction.

There are no alpha-only three letter domains available. Zqx.net? Taken. Ywj.org? Gone. But there are 3777 .com, 22,176 .org and 16,562 .net alpha-numeric combinations still waiting to be snatched up.

Filed in [The Web](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

## Trackback & other notification systems

Thursday, June 12, 2003

John Gruber writes an excellent article on the Trackback system and why a system of referrals (in place at his site) or a centrally located link collector like Technorati is a better solution. I don't use

---

any of the methods listed above. Usually when I respond to something that a person has written, I find the easiest, lo-tech method to be a quick e-mail letting them know.

One problem with the referral system (assuming that it was used everywhere): when Contact Sheet refers to Daring Fireball's Trackback article (as done so above), Contact Sheet will show up in Daring Fireball's referral logs. So then a Daring Fireball visitor clicks on the reference to Contact Sheet, and now Daring Fireball has referred back to Contact Sheet when making no mention of the site (other than simply appearing in the referral logs).

Another: it's time-sensitive. Since the original referral from Contact Sheet likely came from my home page (and not the permalink), you will click on Daring Fireball's referral to Contact Sheet and see no mention of it if you arrive after it's scrolled off the home page.

There is a lot of cross-fire and extra noise without any context or control.

Technorati is great, but as John mentions, it's centrally located and I rarely go to the trouble of typing in an article's URL to see its reach. Someday I may employ a method of referrals out of interest, with the noted limitations.

In the meantime, I will continue to write e-mails when I mention you here.

Filed in Weblogs | Comments (0)

## Education in an Adolescent Profession

Tuesday, June 10, 2003

I love the preliminary research before a project begins. So I picked up *The Education of a Graphic Designer* to start a personal investigation while I consider a master's degree. It's turned out to be the perfect book to help organize thoughts around graduate design school -- what should be valued in design education, which trickles down to reasons for enrolling and what to expect from a good institution.

What follows are some rough notes from the first essay, *Education in an Adolescent Profession*, by Katherine McCoy.

In short, design education is heavily diluted because:

There are no universally recognized guidelines of what qualifies one as a professional graphic designer. The focus is too often on applied design where students learn how to respond to common design problems (akin to flipping through CA) instead of the underlying design fundamentals at play. Few colleges understand that design is not simply the commercialization of fine art.

Bauhaus Design Fundamentals: Correct

Architecture was the earliest design field and the only one to exist 100 years ago. The Bauhaus were

---

the first to lay ground rules, showing the need for a set of design fundamentals before addressing the pragmatic design need:

The Bauhaus Basic Course was the first in design education to declare that basic design principles underlie all design disciplines, that primary design education should begin with abstract problems to introduce these universal elements before students proceed to tackle programmatic design problems applied to specific scales, needs and media. This emphasis on abstraction and experimentation, and the rejection of accepted traditional formulas, represented a radical new attitude in education.

The Bauhaus method of design principles were slow to make their way to US schools and went through Switzerland before being adopted by major studios in the 1960's and eventually taking root in Yale and other premier schools.

Based on objectivity and rationalism, this [Swiss] educational system produced a codified method that was easy to communicate to students, giving them a foundation for a visual design process and composition that went far beyond the superficial emulation of their heros.

But even today, the Bauhaus style of abstract experimentation is usually limited to introductory design survey courses, after which students are forced into a specialization where the simulation of real-world design ensues.

Master/Apprentice: Incorrect

Many schools emulate the master-apprentice model. The apprentice initially takes on the mechanics of the master's work, taking on more and more craft as his skill progresses. Although more vocational than academic, this educational style maps more easily to the job market from the start, and is the driving force behind this method -- to boost graduate employment rates. The main problem is that it's not based on any kind of design standards, but the personal style of the master.

This lack of formalized method has been almost universal in our art schools and university art departments until recently. The typical approach has placed a premium on creativity, a flash of intuition, the Big Idea, and educators have encouraged this, through exposure to "samples and examples"... Graphic design magazines and competition annuals have been most students' only resource. Emulating the work of renowned designers could be seen as a weak continuation of the master/apprentice system without the benefit of personal contact between student and master.

A nugget relevant to my personal quest:

Graduate study should never imitate professional practice; rather, it should challenge students to look deeply into the discipline and into themselves to connect design to its culture, its history, its users, its society, and its technology

And some comments on what lies at the intersection of design and other disciplines that surfaced during a conversation I had with Dave Shea:

But we hear a continuing debate as to whether this profession should lean toward art or toward science. The most recent influences add a third contender to the art/science debate. Literary and critical theorists see design as a language to be read--that graphic design might be considered a form

---

of visual literature.

Although all three orientations are preoccupied with communication and meaning, each stresses a different component of the sender-transmitter-receiver communication model. Design as art is concerned with personal content and expression; design as science is concerned with systematic presentation of objective information; and design as language is concerned with the audience's reading or interpretation of text and content ... Certainly, graphic design will be the richer for the exploration of all three directions.

More to follow.

Filed in [Graphic Design](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#)

## Paper Scissors ROCK

Thursday, June 5, 2003

Highlighting the intersection of design and rock 'n roll, the Experience Music Project is running an exhibition entitled Paper Scissors ROCK: 25 Years of Northwest Punk Poster Design running through September 7th.

The idea of rock posters in a nice new museum seems a little out of context (come to think of it, the idea of a museum dedicated to rock'n'roll seems hopelessly restrained), but I'm still glad it's happening. This review sums it up:

The problem with an exhibition of rock posters is that posterizing is messy, and exhibitions tend to be neat. This, in critical parlance, is a frame problem, and EMP has been saddled--and in turn, has saddled a few exhibitions--with a frame that is too bland, that tends to turn the chaotic, emotional experience of music into something neatly padded into a manageable shape.

In related news, the Stranger's Poster of the Week has been added to the links page.

Filed in [Graphic Design](#), [Seattle](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#)

## Unicast

Wednesday, June 4, 2003

Tim Cavanaugh of Reason magazine writes on the mag's blogsite, Hit & Run:

The big danger in Monday's FCC ruling is supposed to be that it will reduce the variety of opinions, views and commentary represented in the media, and I'm beginning to think that must be true: Since Monday, all the commentary I've heard about the FCC ruling says the same thing: The move will reduce the variety and opinions represented in the media.

I couldn't have said it better myself. The move will reduce the variety and opinions represented in the media.

Filed in [Media](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

---

## Designers Shouldn't Code?

Tuesday, June 3, 2003

I read this Zlog interview with David Shea, and, while I respect his opinion a great deal, vehemently disagree with one point.

Which languages interest you the most and why?

None of 'em, and here's my reason.

I spend a good chunk of my day in Photoshop or Illustrator or whichever graphic tool I'm using at the time. The common thread between the various design packages from Adobe, Macromedia, and Quark are that they all rely on underlying data structures (including PostScript in some cases) that enable me to build my imagery with WYSIWYG tools.

Not once, ever, do I even have the option of looking at the code. I'm kept as far away from it as possible, and let the control over it stay where it belongs - in the capable hands of the software.

This is an incorrect analogy because the designers (engineers) of Photoshop did have access to the code and were in complete control of every behavior in the Photoshop environment. The end user of the design tool shouldn't care about the underlying code for the same reason that an end user of a web site shouldn't be exposed to its code. But those designing should care a great deal.

And that's the way it should be with the web. It makes no sense for a designer to code; they should design. The fundamental layout of a page should be completely hidden from the person building it, otherwise it stifles their creativity.

I'm making the assumption that code = HTML/markup and not logic.

When you're designing a web site you're also (intentionally or not) designing the behavior -- the way the page behaves inside the browser and the interaction of the page to the user. How else can you accurately control the design of your product if you're not constructing the pieces that make up the layout? Sitting behind the coder dictating every nuance just doesn't cut it.

This behavior design comes through subtly in the structure: fixed versus variable width pages greatly affect the design; or blatantly: rollover images, opening new browser sessions in hrefs, etc.

When I start adapting my layout to fit a design I know I can code, the tools are getting in the way of my creativity.

---

Web design is the only design discipline in which the designer can also build from start to finish. Not in print design (usually), industrial design or architecture are they so lucky. If you follow some variation of the Sketchpad -> Illustrator -> Photoshop -> HTML editor process, eliminating the last step of the design process is not suppressing design, but following it through into a realized product. This amount of design control should not be wasted. Even if it's just the initial templates to be chopped up and reapportioned by a web programmer, those templates serve as the foundation of the site from which all coding and structure follows. Obviously one should never begin any project by coding HTML.

How would a designer know what was possible as a web design layout without knowing the code? Early in my career print designers would offer advice on specific designs that were not at all transferrable to the web, with (graphical) fonts spanning photos intersecting body copy that was impossible in 3.0 browsers and impractical in today's updated browsers because they were ignorant to how the pages were laid out and how the code worked.

This is how its still done at design agencies all the time and is a completely foreign concept to me. Throughout jobs at large and small companies I've been fortunate enough to have never belonged to a creative team larger than six or seven people and have avoided assembly-line design entirely. Maybe I'm just a control freak -- I don't trust others to fully execute my design vision for a site and maintain structural integrity when the "site builders" join the game in the fourth quarter. But to me, web design is a bridge between art and science where design and code are inseparable elements of the media in which we're communicating.

Filed in Web Design | Comments (7)

## Finally compliant

Monday, June 2, 2003

Thanks to a little help from Zeldman and liberal use of the w3c XHTML validator, this site is finally XHTML Transitional.

The most uncomfortable part of switching to XHTML (in theory as well as practice) was changing the ampersand-separators in URL HREFs from & to &, thereby changing the URL's physical location and trusting that all browsers going forward will properly translate this. Even scarier in a Microsoft-dominated world -- who knows what they'll do with standards in coming years. Nevertheless, it was a leap of faith that made me more uncomfortable than I'd like.

The other pesky item: what to do with image alt tags that are solely for aesthetics that have no accessibility value (such as the dividers between the buttons on the top nav of this page). Why must they contain an alt tag, other than for zen-of-perfection reasons to get the designer in the good habit of including them with every image and button? I've left them as empty quotes, which Lynx seems to ignore. Otherwise it's just extra noise for text-only readers.

Other than these minor points, the arguments I've read from web standards folks for XHTML & CSS generated sites are overwhelming -- the general shift towards XML, the ability to keep content separate from markup code and the bandwidth savings that results from the cached CSS, increased accessibility, wider interoperability of browsers and web devices -- there's really no reason not to

---

make the leap.

Filed in [Web Design](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

## NYT News Tracker II: Opt-in E-mail

Saturday, May 31, 2003

What bothers me most about the NYT charging for its News Tracker program is that they're making their customers pay for for easier accessibility to content -- not the content itself.

By discontinuing to freely send out emails alerting their interested, opt-in audience with content the audience has identified as important, they're disregarding a significant potential they could tap, eventually leading to paid subscriptions or other services (except for the small fraction that will pay the \$19.95/year for the service).

Instead, they should continue to take advantage of their readers' interest and willingness to accept e-mails -- these emails, serving valuable functions to the users, also serve an even more important marketing function for the NYT company. I'm not going to (happily) accept emails from the NYT that are solely advertising spam. However, I will gladly accept an e-mail telling me there's content on the site I've identified as important to me that may be wrapped in other marketing messages. They're not seeing the value of these e-mailing features to the overall company.

Charging for secondary accessibility features, rather than the primary content, doesn't make sense. After I stop receiving News Tracker e-mails, I'll visit the NYT that much less resulting in less ad revenue for the site, less visibility of their new features and services, and less resonance in their brand overall.

Filed in [Web Design](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

## NYT News Tracker

Wednesday, May 28, 2003

The NY Times is squeezing money from every nook and cranny of its website. After shutting off permanent links several weeks ago (which has surely hurt their rate of incoming links), I just received an email from them. It reads in part:

Times News Tracker has been such a hit with loyal users like yourself that we've been working hard to build new enhancements to make keeping in touch with your world even easier. But providing this valuable service to our readers requires time and resources so we've made the hard decision to convert Times News Tracker to a subscription service.

So now if I want to have daily emails sent to me with keywords "Seattle", "Nebraska" or "Portugal" I have to shell out \$19.95/year. This, with absolutely no discounts for regular daily paper subscribers! Pbfft.

As this nation's newspaper of record, the NYT's significance on the web is diminishing as they continue to put up more fee boundaries around their content.

In response to my email stating that I would never pay for online services when I'm already shelling out \$30+/month for the printed paper, the NYT writes back:

NYTimes.com is part of a different division than The Times newspaper, and each division manages its own products and is responsible for its own revenue. At this time we are not able to offer

---

combined print and online discounts, but will continue to explore these types of offers.

News Tracker is a valuable service that requires staffing time and resources. After significant research and user polling, we decided to enhance the service and charge for it.

Oh, a part of a different division, so obviously the services and fees simply cannot be integrated for the same content. Pbff. They obviously haven't studied the user experience here.. why would someone pay for the same content twice? The web site, as a mostly free service, should compliment the printed paper, promote the brand (unbiased, authoratative, accurate (minus Jayson Blair), comprehensive, trusted), and not try to be a money-making entity itself. I came to the printed paper through the online edition as it was just getting off the ground. Others, too, buy the printed paper after clicking on links sent through email and referenced on web sites. The incentives to link to NYT content are dwindling since the links will be broken (or rather, require a fee three times the cost of a daily paper) just days after being published. As Dave Winer observes, they're losing web market share while they figure all of this out.

Filed in Media | Comments (0)

## Weekend

Tuesday, May 27, 2003

My, what a three day weekend away from electricity can do for a guy.

Filed in Real Life | Comments (0)

## Webby Awards

Friday, May 23, 2003

Today is the last day to cast votes for the Webby Awards People's Voice. Nominees that I care about include: Moveable Type for Best Practices, Romenesko for News, and Netflix for Services (even though they could offer more features).

Not that I generally care much about awards, but the site I work for was actually invited to the first annual Webby Business Awards later this year.

Filed in Web Design | Comments (3)

## Only Dancing

Wednesday, May 21, 2003

Last night I went to the Crocodile to see Hello From Waveland. During the beginning of their set, four 50-something couples, the men dressed in beige blazers, the women dressed in nice evening clothes, walked in, lit up smokes and started shaking their hips. I realized they weren't from around here when one approached the bar and said, "Two beer. How much?"

Their otherness stood out like a turd in a punchbowl -- their attire, their age, their sophistication,

---

mostly their comfortableness with all this distance. I heard later they were Spanish, and their chain smoking confirmed it. Did they read about the Crocodile in a tourism book as somewhere young, hip and not-to-miss? I couldn't stop watching them -- they were having fun -- they watched the entire set and took pictures of themselves dancing and gesturing in front of the band. I found myself culturally jealous. The members of my Seattle culture were dressed in black with arms crossed wearing self-conscious scowls on their pale faces. The Spaniards were there to have fun.

Filed in Real Life | Comments (3)

## The Digital City

Wednesday, May 21, 2003

Here is an example of the vast online infrastructure the northwest has in its regional and local government: the Seattle Department of Transportation has a pothole repair page on its web site. Word on the street (yuk, yuk) says that after filing a report, potholes are often fixed the very next day.

Filed in Seattle | Comments (1)

## Geek R&eacute;sum&eacute;:

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

In the spirit of other geek r&eacute;sum&eacute;:

1981 - First computer, a TI-99/4A. I immediately started entering BASIC programs from magazines and writing my own. One rule -- I had to "wash my hands" before using it.

1982 - Went to my first TI-99 user group. Boy, the early 80's computing community.. talk about geekfest. At least my excuse was being nine.

1983 - Watched Wargames and was inspired.

1984 - Dad brought home our first household Intel-based computer, a Compaq "Portable" Plus 8086, larger and heavier than most sewing machines, with a six inch green screen and a 10 MB hard drive.

1985 - In junior high computer classes in front of the TRS-80, I RULED.

1986 - Started using local Omaha BBS's for email, file exchange, and even chatting on multi-line BBS's. Citinet, The Crypt, Mages Inn.

1988 - Debuted a BBS called FAST (on a 1200 baud modem).

1989 - Went to some BBS-centered gatherings at Perkins. Mostly awed by the geekdom, but also met some of the best friends that I've ever had. Jen, Ed, Chris.

1990 - Disciplined for stealing my teacher's password, logging in and sending broadcast messages to my friends as him.

1991 - I started using the Internet (still before Mosaic was released) at UNO, in the Gateway newsroom in the dark afterhours on large black and white Mac displays, with Ed. We emailed, posted to newsgroups, chatted (with Unix 'talk'), FTP'd, used Photoshop 2.0 to scan and distort photos, played computer games (eventually Marathon) and ate pizza until the early morning hours.

1992 - Got a used 386, Windows 3.1 capable machine for \$300. I could finally multitask (other than through some hacked way like Borland's Sidekick), and no more command line.

1993 - Posted to newsgroups about VW's and drugs.

1994 - Went on a 7000 mile road trip around western North America with Ed, visiting and staying with more than a dozen people we'd corresponded with online via newsgroups and the sito community. The Internet was still safe in 1994.

1995 - Luddite phase.

No new developments. Except to learn that technological progress is inevitable, and that there are many important limitations to the Internet, namely, eye contact.

1996 - Upgraded the 386 to a 486 and Windows 95. I could finally surf the web from home.

---

1997 - With a newly minted English degree (and art minor), I needed to find a job. Went back to Ed to learn the basics of HTML. I wrote down about 10 tags on a sheet of paper, then went home and dissected dozens of web sites. Started working for a computing magazine doing HTML work.

1998 - Got a job as a web designer at a design studio.

1999 - First dot-com.

2000 - Second dot-com.

2001 - Third dot-com.

2002 - Married a woman I first communicated with online three years previously.

2003 - Started a blog.

Filed in Technology | Comments (3)

## Seattle: the Sequel

Monday, May 19, 2003

In Rem Readings the NY Times talks about Seattle's distrust of the new Rem Koolhaas design for the Seattle Public Library.

Much of the library backlash can be attributed to the fear of being conned by big-city hucksters. This isn't just xenophobia. People in Seattle have reason to feel crabby about buildings designed by famous architects. Twelve years ago, we got Robert Venturi's dull -- yet impossible to navigate -- Seattle Art Museum, dominated by a gigantic staircase to nowhere. Its massive facade inspired a general yawn. In 2000, Frank Gehry gave us the garishly colored, extravagantly crumpled and disarmingly silly Experience Music Project.

There is a feeling that big city architecture doesn't belong here, especially since we're not offered the signature buildings, but the stylized, paycheck-generating derivatives. The Space Needle is uniquely Seattle, but the EMP is not quite as impressive as Gehry's museum in Bilbao--always compared to the architect's more popular previous work.

Rem's library seems different and I hope that it is. He certainly breaks new ground in his manifestos about architecture. I have followed his books and other writing about place, process, globalization and media with much greater interest. The NY Prada store was his answer to the realization that most public space was retail space--why weren't high-profile projects going on there? But few of these manifestos have been turned into architecture, and fewer still have been seen as successes.

Rem has achieved pop-architecture status without creating memorable buildings. So with the Seattle Public Library, there is a chance that both the architect and the city can achieve architectural significance come next year when the library opens.

Filed in Architecture, Seattle | Comments (2)

## The Usability Pitch

Monday, May 19, 2003

After finishing a round of usability tests I was interested to read Jakob Nielsen article today, Convincing Clients to Pay for Usability. Particularly interesting was how to handle the question, if you're a competent designer, why can't you create a functional web site without having to test it?

---

Nielsen then lists these analogies, professionals who require (by law or common sense) their work to be tested before public release:

Software engineers have a test team to catch bugs

Architects have structural engineers to test their designs, design models for review, computer generated walk-throughs

Writer have editors to catch grammatical mistakes and structural pitfalls

These projects have a design and test phase in their life cycle. Depending on the type of product, the testing comes either before, after, or during the build phase, whichever will cause the least pain if the design needs to change. With virtually any product, a prototype is built and tested on a sample audience.

Other analogies from the top of my head:

Advertisers conduct vast market research on the client's target audience before launching large campaigns

Biologists go through daunting clinical trials before releasing treatments to the public

Automobile makers conduct crash tests to reinforce safety in their brands and avoid lawsuits.

Sure, no one will die if the UI doesn't work, but lack of sufficient testing causing a product recall (called a redesign in the web world) is just as financially devastating and can cause months of perceived online stagnation to customers.

In certain rare cases, design can be a life or death issue. I used to work with some of the original engineers of Microsoft Access. On a customer visit to a government contractor, they were shown how Access was used for the launch sequences of nuclear submarines, each advancing page of the sequence one step closer to nuclear holocaust. Who knows what bugs were lurking in the code--maybe MySQL would have been a better choice?

Filed in [Web Design](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

## Chagrin

Friday, May 16, 2003

Today I viewed Contact Sheet on a Mac. Oops. The experience was much like noticing that my zipper was down for the last two months--the site's broken all over the friggin' place.

Since the company I work for builds client software largely for Windows and Linux, I'd gotten out of the habit of checking my work on a Mac. I was long overdo in firing up the G4.

My half-baked idea of swapping out stylesheets to change themes was largely the root of the problem (although no doubt it was broken before). Using the different colored nav images as backgrounds worked on paper, but not on all the current browsers. So I'll have to hardcode the nav images and if I want to swap themes, write some scripty thing to do the html swapping, or just change directories or some other fancy wizardry. But it won't be as easy as swapping one line of the CSS.

---

Which, since the bandwidth issue, I've decided to rotate themes on a weekly or monthly basis and take advantage of that CSS and GIF caching.

Updates soon, and enough talk about this site.

Filed in Web Design

## CSS & Bandwidth

Thursday, May 15, 2003

One of the common pro-CSS arguments is that XHTML/CSS designed web sites save bandwidth since the designs don't contain repeated use of tables, spacer gifs and other tricks to tweak layout.

So I thought it interesting that since I moved more in that direction\* and also started rotating stylesheets on a daily basis, I've seen my bandwidth usage skyrocket per page view. Previously the bandwidth had been ~10KB/page. I started with a new CSS and it shot up to 14KB on Tuesday, then yesterday to 87KB!

This is what I have gathered:

Some of the increase is due to bulkier pages in general. I expanded the number of articles displayed from 10 to 15, making the index.html 8KB larger. I replaced a lightweight version of the header with the full-blown CSS c-clamp on the popular telephone pages, and the header graphic yesterday was also on the fat side at 12KB.

Users have to load the CSS and GIF set anew each day.

Users to most blogs, including this one, regularly only view one page each day, the homepage. The bandwidth savings of CSS/XHTML are thinner in these cases since you're not benefitting from the .css being cached on subsequent pages per visit.

As an experiment I put the rotation on hold. Today, without changing a thing, the average is back down to 24KB (today's index.html is 22KB), presumeably because yesterday's .css and .gifs are cached in many users' browsers. The bad news, to continue rotating the stylesheets will continue to eat up bandwidth until each theme is rotated back in again. But I'm ok with it if my service provider is.

\*still nowhere near compliant, and fine with it.

Filed in Web Design

## More French

Thursday, May 15, 2003

French's Mustard is in a conundrum. It's listed on as an ok-to-purchase product on the French Boycott Watch page, for those participating in the ridiculous boycott, since it's made in Rochester, NY. However, French's makes no mention of it on their own website. What could be worse -- identifying themselves as a "made in USA" product in these blindly patriotic times, or dilluting their marketing efforts by not really being French?

---

But we all know the U.S. has more to lose than anyone if we start playing this idiotic game of isolationism.

Filed in Adspeak

## French is just another word for nothing left to lose

Tuesday, May 13, 2003

The lunacy:

After a Bush adviser last month said her husband [Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry] looked French, Ms. Heinz Kerry, who speaks five languages, made news by sneering that the president's advisers "probably don't even speak French."

She said on Friday that she thought any damage from her remarks was minor.

Filed in Politics

## Seattle Newspaper War

Tuesday, May 13, 2003

The Seattle Times claims that their circulation lead over the Seattle Post-Intelligencer grew in the last year.

Does this include the free six-days-a-week newspapers they've been sending to our house for the past few months? Or is this to further their money-losing scheme so they can get out of the joint operating agreement with rival Seattle Post-Intelligencer?

Filed in Media

## New Threads

Tuesday, May 13, 2003

I changed the site's clothes.

But I can easily go back to the previous getup by editing one line of one file, thanks to CSS. Now all I need to do is set up a cron job to rotate skins every day. Since digging deeper into CSS a few weeks ago, all I see are advantages. As long as you're willing to forgo the slim slice of pie that still enjoys their Netscape 3 browsers, that is. Previously I used CSS for common font styles but rarely anything more. Now I'm taking it on the job, and everywhere else.

Although not XHTML compliant (I'll bet) I'll continue to experiment with this site's layout in the coming weeks to find out exactly what can be done. I'm still fond of tables and am not ashamed to use them. But now I don't have to go six tables deep to get the right spacing. Oh what fun.

Filed in Web Design

---

## Reinventing the Wheel

Friday, May 9, 2003

I purchased Reinventing the Wheel after flipping through the book at Elliot Bay Bookstore. I'm a sucker for these kinds of niche retro-design books, and this one offers a narrow slice of design history through the rotating wheel chart. Makes me want to create new wheels for everything -- a color-coded wheel chart for all of my "outfits" (a la Geranimals), a kilograms-to-pounds converter (for that European bathroom scale), dot-com wheel-o-facts...

Even though the book is about the collection and you don't even notice the written comments in your first eight flip-throughs of the book (at least from the graphic design point of view), author and collector Jessica Helfand does an excellent job of organizing and describing the pieces from their ancient astrological beginnings to 50's pop kitch.

Filed in Books & Magazines

## Analog Reigns

Thursday, May 8, 2003

Just as the Seattle International Film Festival announces their roster of films for the 2003 festival (oooo), I have catalogued my entire 16mm Film Collection so we can start viewings at CS HQ.

My prizes, of course, are the feature length films, of which I have seven beautiful classic prints (ok, one's a hokey western, but coolly kitch). That, and a few odd Woody Allen TV appearances and some great '70s television commercials. Also an early documentary (which was often staged, and extremely condescending) by Luis Buñuel, copies of the first motion pictures ever by Louis Lumière. More local to the northwest, I have movies about the explosion and aftermath of Mt. St. Helens, including one 16mm home movie recording of an ascent of the volcano as it was bulging, days before it exploded. And dozens of documentaries and educational films.

The best things about 16mm

I love 16mm because it's clunky and beautiful. The actual light passing through celluloid, projected on a screen.. there's no digital presentation that comes close to that kind of sensational image.

The colors.

You're watching a real movie.

It's low-tech. You can get a projector for < \$25 on ebay.

Blockbuster has nothing like it.

The worst things about 16mm

You can't fall asleep on the couch while watching movies (you have to get up to change reels every 45 minutes, and it's a rude awakening when you let the film run to the end of the reel).

They eventually wear out, fade, turn to vinegar.

---

Of course there's the noise. The constant ch-ch-ch of the frames chattering by is nauseating without a soundbox (which I have none), but you eventually learn to love it. You can't get much after the early 1980's. As my good friend CV says, "It's extremely addictive. Worse than heroin."

Filed in Film, Seattle | Comments (2)

## The Designer is the Message

Wednesday, May 7, 2003

Jeffrey Zeldman talked about art direction vs. design last week, and mentioned something that's been on my mind for a long time. I'll quote him at length:

Many design curricula encourage their students to develop a unique visual vocabulary (a style) that can be grafted onto any real-world project, regardless of its audience or message. Most superstars of print or web design have followed that advice. Their work is about their sensibility, not about the product or service. It communicates, at most, that the product or service is cool or edgy.

Design no longer serves the product; the product serves the design. The product is merely a vehicle allowing the designer to express his vision. Thus design becomes a commodified version of fine art (and practically the only version of fine art that pays).

Zeldman lays out an accurate analysis of the current state of web design &mdash; look at the web design award winners &mdash; the sites are usually highly attractive, stylized, unusable sites, where the potential empowerment of the target audience is usurped as a monument to the designer.

Why, then, is successful art direction hard to find on web sites while stylized self-indulgence appears everywhere?

Obviously, the web as a medium must be utilitarian &mdash; you can't turn the physical pages with your hands, so the UI must be omnipresent. Since standard HTML UI is considered ugly (and displayed differently by each OS and browser), or blue underlined links are inconvenient for a particular design (guilty as charged), the UI is invented uniquely by every web designer out there. And as with any physical product from toothbrushes to sneakers, the design is stylized, ideally, but not commonly, as a continuation of the brand.

The UI makes up most of the visual information that a visitor sees. That's why web designer is commonplace while web art director is not. Magazine sites can't fill their index pages with cover images (i.e., traditional art direction) because if people can't immediately find the table of contents on the web, they'll go somewhere else. So the role of art direction on the web becomes subordinate &mdash; the art direction is in the subsidiary editorial artwork &mdash; there are no full spreads.

---

Even sites that display some degree of art direction in their content (like Salon, Slate and Jugglezine), the UI design still visually defines the site, however subtle or overpowering it may be.

But this is getting beside the point. Because the medium doesn't allow obvious opportunities for art direction doesn't mean web sites must be exploited agents for the designers' commodified fine art. Art direction on the web is about matching appropriate UI style with the brand, setting tone and enforcing consistency across microsites and ad hoc digital media, working with the designer to balance usable functionality and accessibility of content for the end user (no extra plug-ins necessary).

And as with any product from toothbrushes to sneakers, everyone involved must observe the target audience using the site and make changes accordingly. If sites achieve these goals and are still nice to look at, the web will have come a long way.

Filed in Graphic Design, Web Design | Comments (1)

## People

Friday, May 2, 2003

This note to self found in a San Jose cubicle when looking for scratch paper.

Filed in Overheard

## Visual Explanation

Thursday, May 1, 2003

The Art of Explanation from Poynter Online is a collection of published news illustrations and notes of the newsroom conversations that took place during the creation of war-related graphics. The visual journalists detail the strategy and process behind their illustrations--an interesting look into the thought processes behind this visual side of the news.

A German illustrator who submitted his graphic How Much US Weapons Cost is forward about his feelings for the Iraq war and talks about some graphics, such as Saddam's bunker, which are purely speculative.

A Spanish graphic artist for El Correo describes his team's illustration of combat over a bridge in Iraq: We're trying to avoid the "Map and arrows and flying around planes" formula and trying to create graphics that tell stories to our readers.

Filed in Graphic Design

---

## Born Liar

Wednesday, April 30, 2003

Saw the new Fellini documentary this weekend, *Fellini: I'm a Born Liar*. The film didn't adequately celebrate the maestro's life or work. Nor did it offer any juicy details about Fellini's personal life that lovers of his films would be superficially interested in, since he was very much about the eclectic and the façade. Instead we're exposed to Fellini through clips of a 1993 interview and from the films we already know. If his films stand on their own, why create a documentary at all? Give us the peeps.

Liar is nothing more than a series of interview clips and film clips, fluctuating back and forth for two hours without any real investigation. Interesting bits included juxtaposed quotes of Fellini contradicting others, like when he says he got along great with the actors, then cuts to Donald Sutherland claiming he was a tyrant with the actors. Misquoting Fellini, "The actors don't mind being puppets as long as they have a good puppeteer."

Another amusing clip was Terence Stamp talking about the shooting of *Spirits of the Dead* (which, after seeing the clips, is next on my Netflix list), on his first day in Rome, his first day on the set, his first scene in front of the camera, he got up there and demanded some direction from Fellini. Fellini took him aside and said something close to: "Imagine you were at a party last night where you had whiskey, marijuana, cocaine, whiskey, and you had a whorly, fucking everyone--it was a whorly. A black man comes and caresses your hair and you fuck him. You did this all night and right as you get here, someone puts a tab of LSD on your tongue, and then you walk on stage." They roll the clip, and that was it, exactly.

Filed in Film

## Governor

Wednesday, April 30, 2003

On today's flight to San Jose we were joined by Washington Governor Gary Locke, who hopped on the plane right before takeoff. Interesting to note that now that the state's in a budget crisis and he's taken away a voter-mandated teacher's raise, he's gone the extra step to fly commercial first class instead of chartered luxury jets. Self-sacrificing, our governor.

Filed in Seattle

## Hockey Stick

Tuesday, April 29, 2003

So here's what it looks like when a page from your brand new measly weblog that normally receives six or seven or zero visits per day is mentioned in a widely visited newsfeed:

Our analysts are still tracking this trend and will report back with any concrete findings. Preliminary reports indicate an increase in traffic.

Now back to those regular 4 visitors from Fargo..

Filed in Weblogs | Comments (2)

---

## Bad Choice of Words

Monday, April 28, 2003

In the May/June issue of *Communication Arts*, the Letters section includes this diatribe:

Someone please tell Joel Nakamura (or better yet, CA's snoozing editors) that it's "dual," meaning two counters, and not "duel" [January/February, p. 54].

Good God, nothing ruins a writer's or professional journal's credibility for me more than simple, third-grade-level word usage. Let's get it together, people, you're supposed to be better than this.

Steve Dreyer  
Freddie Mac Design Studio  
McLean, Virginia

Normally I find this kind of armchair grammatical nit-picking akin to comments overheard in art museums about the frames instead of the paintings within. If the written or spoken message gets across, then communication is achieved. Mr. Dreyer, in a letter that could lend a lesson from a good style guide itself, unintentionally points out that there are more than mechanics to good writing.

Filed in Writing & Language | Comments (0)

```
<!--  
<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"  
  xmlns:trackback="http://madskills.com/public/xml/rss/module/trackback/"  
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">  
<rdf:Description  
  rdf:about="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/04/23/how_to_make_friends_by_telephone.html"  
  trackback:ping="http://contactsheet.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/13"  
  dc:title="How to make friends by Telephone"  
  
  dc:identifier="http://contactsheet.org/articles/2003/04/23/how_to_make_friends_by_telephone.html"  
  dc:subject="Graphic Design"  
  dc:description=" Be sure it&apos;s clear to the person to whom you are talking that the  
conversation is finished. Then replace the receiver gently. A receiver banged down may seem like  
slamming the door in someone&apos;s face. When my grandparents did..."  
  dc:creator="ss"  
  dc:date="2003-04-23T12:12:26-08:00" />  
</rdf:RDF>  
-->
```

## How to make friends by Telephone

Wednesday, April 23, 2003

Be sure it's clear to the person to whom you are talking that the conversation is finished. Then replace

---

the receiver gently. A receiver banged down may seem like slamming the door in someone's face.

When my grandparents did some housecleaning a few years ago, they offered me this instructional booklet entitled *How to make friends by Telephone* and asked if I'd be interested in it. I estimate it to be from the 1940's &mdash; it's from an era when it was still proper to capitalize Telephone, much like the capitalization of Internet today, which will cease when it's finally seen as a common utility (there's already a crusade underway).

It has scribbles on some of the pages, probably from a relative of mine, maybe my mother when she was learning the etiquette of proper phone usage.

Click on the image to advance through the pages.

And remember: speak to the person at the other end of the line &mdash; not to the telephone &mdash; then you're more apt to be pleasant and understanding.

Filed in Graphic Design

| TrackBack

(0)

## Fence

Tuesday, April 22, 2003

I rebuilt the fence that blew over on Christmas Day. Merry Christmas.

Now all those snot-nosed BRATS will stay off MY LAND.

Filed in Real Life

## BUY STITCHES TODAY

Monday, April 21, 2003

STITCHES did amazing things for me. After using STITCHES for just ten days, my insides are staying in and protected from the elements!

">STITCHES come in:

**STAINLESS STEEL WIRE:** is inert and maintains strength for a long time. It does not harbor bacteria.

**SILK:** animal protein, relatively inert for human tissue, loses strength over long periods. Silk sutures are multifilament and provide a potential haven for bacteria.

**CATGUT:** from the submucosa of the bovine intestine, eventually resorb. It excites considerable inflammatory reaction and tends to potentiate infections. It loses strength rapidly and it's of little use in modern surgery.

**SYNTHETIC NONABSORBABLE SUTURES:** generally inert and retain strength longer than wire. They must usually be knotted at least four times because of their poor handling characteristics, resulting in retained foreign bodies.

**SYNTHETIC ABSORBABLE SUTURES:** strong, with predictable rates of loss of tensile strength, incite a minimal inflammatory response and may have special usefulness in gastrointestinal urologic and gynecological surgeries.

---

TAPE: skin closure of choice for clean or contaminated wounds, with minimal probability of infections. They cannot be used in actively bleeding or complex surface wounds.

Try STITCHES for your open wounds today!

Filed in Real Life

## The Dinner Party

Friday, April 18, 2003

Her: I hope I didn't embarrass Matt [by giving him a spontaneous lapdance in front of 25 coworkers and their significant others at a company dinner party]. I think I'm in trouble with my husband&mdash;he doesn't know Matt's gay.

Him: Oh, really? Matt's comment about how could you think about wearing white shoes before Memorial Day didn't tip him off?

Filed in Overheard

## Advertising in books

Thursday, April 17, 2003

Advertisements contain the only truths to be relied on in a newspaper.  
&mdash;Mark Twain

Jason Kottke talks about advertising in books as a way to lower the price of books. He also makes the claim that:

I believe the world is a better place without advertising absolutely everywhere. But if advertising makes books more affordable -- and in some cases absolutely free -- and therefore accessible to more people, it's hard to argue that it wouldn't be a good idea.

Dare I say, go to the library for free? (Unless you live in Seattle, of course)

Going one ludicrous step further and following the Hollywood paradigm, there could be paid product placement in novels:

Dickens:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. You can have even better times with Fritos® brand corn chips!"

Melville:

"There she blows!- there she blows! A hump as graceful as the new Volkswagen Beetle®! It is Moby-Dick! Drivers wanted.®"

Shakespeare:

"Sleep seldom visits sorrow; when it doth, it is a comforter. Sorrow getting the best of you? Try Paxil®, because your life is waiting!"

Emily Dickinson:

"Because I could not stop for death, He kindly stopped for me; The carriage held but just ourselves

---

and immortality and my Nokia® 6800 cell phone."

Filed in Books & Magazines

## Iraqis complain, NYT slims down

Wednesday, April 16, 2003

From a NY Times story entitled Free to Protest, Iraqis Complain About the U.S., Iraqis are free to speak out against the American presence in their country without the worry of being jailed for protesting, as was the case before the U.S. invasion.

Since I'm a daily reader, I also noted that NY Times articles no longer have the left nav--the pages look cleaner and instead they have a breadcrumb strip at the top and a dropdown to jump to sections of the newspaper. This move puts less visual noise down by the article you're reading, and the entire article pages are completely void of ads--nice while it lasts.

UPDATE: That lasted about 8 minutes before ads started appearing on every article page.

Filed in Web Navigation

## Quark 6 Translation

Monday, April 14, 2003

Here's an amusing version of the Quark 6 press release translated for longtime Xpress users.

### UPDATED

If you're not familiar with design software tools (and even if you are), here's a brief history and commentary of Quark, Pagemaker and other design programs throughout the years.

And more on the innovation and stagnation of Quark XPress and why InDesign hasn't gained more marketshare.

Filed in Graphic Design

## ME STILL OPEN

Sunday, April 13, 2003

The Choice Deli on the corner of 8th and 65th St NW is evidently known for carrying smut magazines:

Most convenience stores only stock well-known adult publications like Playboy, Penthouse, and Hustler. Then there are a few more daring spots that also offer titles like Barely Legal and that magazine with naked women on motorcycles. But the grand prize for convenient smut has to go to Ballard's Choice Deli and Grocery. Choice carries over 25 titles--like Big Butt, D-Cup, Fox, Cuddles, and Young and Tight--and they don't hide them behind the counter. Such free commingling of porn with milk, bread, and jerky may signal a significant slip in civilization's decline or may be seen as a welcome rebuke to our nation's puritanical mores.

But what I know about them is from their marquee that I drive by each day. Let's follow the evolution of the sign since my first days of living in Ballard (all dates are from memory):

Spring 2001

---

The was the innocent beginning, with a Henry Weinard's 6 pack on special.

HENRY WEINHARDS 6 PACK \$4.99

June 2001 - October 2001

I'm not sure if this was the doing of a disgruntled employee taking advantage of a non-native English speaking storekeeper, or whether some high school kids rearranged the letters that just weren't changed for months. The store is right next to the Ballard High School. This message was up there for the entire summer.

HARD WEINER 69 PACK

November 2001

After a short hiatus we were given this much more direct communication.

ME PENI HARD

March 2003

I don't know what was on the sign between November 2001 and February 2003, but it was nothing memorable. Maybe it was the length of time between the wait that made this sign so great as a reference to earlier eras, or the short amount of time that it was up (1 day), but I giggled for hours after driving by.

ME PENI STILL HARD

March 2003 - Present

The day after the aforementioned title, it was suddenly changed to this, probably on the request of an upset neighbor. I can only wait and hope that the legend of the sign will continue to brighten my days.

ME STILL OPEN

Filed in Seattle

## Sugar Daddy Be Gone

Friday, April 11, 2003

The wife got a job.

Time to go shopping.

Filed in Ms., Real Life

## LA Times Talks About Altered Photo

Thursday, April 10, 2003

The same week the LA Times was awarded three Pulitzer Prizes, they talk about their photographer assigned to Iraq who altered a photograph to improve the photograph's composition. The photoshop-happy photographer was dismissed.

---

This raises an interesting question for the Times Rights and Permissions FAQ that I stumbled across regarding the licensing of Times' articles, photos and graphics:

Q: May I alter the photograph or graphic illustration?

A: No, photographs and graphics must be used as published.

Must the licensee use the altered photograph "as published" even though it was altered? You see where I'm going...

Filed in Media, Photography

## No More Foolin' the NY Times

Sunday, April 6, 2003

Free access to articles on the New York Times web site used to expire after 30 days. After that time you were required to pay \$2.95 to read an article if you used NYT's search to find it. But if you had the original URL to the month-old content, the one that appeared in their index pages when the article was current, you could still access it freely for an unlimited period of time. This allowed sites to link to NYT articles without forcing those users to pay for the specific article referred, while people who used the NYT's own search for research would have to pay the fee.

I often wanted to take another look at articles I'd read in the printed edition after their free period expired and would be irritated by the \$2.95 fee after already paying them \$46/month for the daily subscription. But I didn't want to keep stacks of old newspapers lying around in the chance that I might want to read something again, so I duped the NYT by creating a daily cron job that would capture each day's HTML of each major section of the newspaper. I also stripped out the advertisements and other repetitive junk to get each day's HTML grab down to ~1MB. The cron'd Perl script would then save the HTML according to date/month/year/section so I could do a search for an article on the NYT web site and then access the original link from my archives with a few clicks.

But today I noticed the NYT shut down free access for ALL URLs! By denying those with original links access to the articles it means that linking to NY Times will be worthless after seven days (unless the casual reader wants to pony up \$2.95), so they can expect an enormous drop in incoming traffic. They've even reeled back the free period from 30 days to 7 days, without providing any special leeway for daily subscribers.

I'm bummed that my favorite major newspaper is shutting out folks like me who subscribe to the daily newspaper but prefer to preserve articles in a digital format. I assume they're getting pressure to make the web site financially sustainable and, since the amount of growth the free online edition has provided for the paid printed version is not quantifiable and disregarded, this was the knee-jerk reaction to increase revenue before management had a reasonable, thought-out plan for subscribers.

I'm not planning on further subverting the NYT by grabbing every single page of each day's news--that seems a bit extreme and would gobble up more HD space than would be worth. Instead I've written to [feedback@nytimes.com](mailto:feedback@nytimes.com) and am hoping they'll come up with a better solution, especially for paid subscribers.

Filed in Media, Technology | Comments (1)

## Welcome Contact Sheet

---

Friday, April 4, 2003

Last night I was checking domain names (a habit I can't kick) and lo and behold, [contactsheet.org](http://contactsheet.org) was available. Contact Sheet is an appropriate name for the site because, in addition to the obvious photo reference which will become more apparent in coming weeks, the writing and image logging is unfiltered and in a very unrefined (pure?) state. Grab-everything and make sense of it later. Blogs are just that--the raw materials that others can mine, examine, organize, reshape, harvest, etc. Contact Sheet is born.

That, and the site's previous name, what i know, is too close to the popular, nice looking and well-written blog site [What do i know](http://whatidoiknow.com).

Filed in [Weblogs](#)

## CNN is working to confirm

Thursday, April 3, 2003

I am subscribed to the CNN Breaking News list, and I periodically get messages like this:

U.S. troops launch assault on Baghdad international airport, wire services report. CNN is working to confirm.

So, they're saying We don't know if it's true or not, but being first to deliver the news is more important than being right, so here's our hunch.

These emails are also flawed because they link to the CNN home page.. so if you don't read them until the next day, any relevance to that particular news flash is long gone from the home page.

Filed in [Media](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#)

## Seattle Monorail - The Latest Route

Wednesday, April 2, 2003

The Seattle Monorail Project has released the Green Line Preferred Alternative Report today. This is important to us because our house is two blocks from the proposed line--close enough to be convenient, hopefully far enough away to be silent. The corner fruit & vegetable market, The Top Banana, looks like it will be saved and instead they're planning on building the station where the brand new ugly Quiznos box curenly sits (the box with diagonal lines on the map).

The vegetable stand is literally right out our back door, and now it look as though the Monorail station will be, too. As noted above, you can make out what appears to be our kitchen and garage on this map from page 27 of the report.

Filed in [Seattle](#), [Urban Planning](#)

## BBC Redesign

Wednesday, April 2, 2003

I finally read through this comprehensive document detailing the BBC redesign last year.

---

Perhaps the most interesting part is the "digital patina" where hot areas (as defined by more click-throughs) actually get darker and "wear a path" through certain areas of the homepage over the course of the day. This is reminiscent of a sculpture I saw in Portland by Cian where each person who walked by made a small electrical etching in this metal cube. Lo-fi collaborative art. BBC could give its users bumper stickers that read I'm changing the web site! Ask me how!

This kind of real life example of what the BBC put into its redesign is more valuable than most web design how-to guides.

Filed in Web Design

## Decoding Visual Language in News Content

Wednesday, April 2, 2003

From Decoding Visual Language in News Content

News delivery in this country is increasingly comprised of carefully crafted displays of visual information. As consumers of information, however, most of us have never been taught to critically read or decode images and other graphic displays of information in the same ways that we have been taught to analyze verbal communication. We are taught reading comprehension and writing skills throughout most of our educational experience, but not visual language comprehension. Yet, if we wish to remain critical viewers of the news media in the midst of this imagedriven, converging media landscape, we must develop equally sophisticated visual literacy skills.

Filed in Graphic Design, Media

## Rummy Vexes the Enemy

Wednesday, April 2, 2003

He's either putting a curse on Saddam or about to play a demonic tune on the piano. Either way, he's pissed that the military's taking so long to win the war already.

Note: For those counting, this is already the second time I've made fun of Donald Rumsfeld in the short life of my blog.

Filed in Politics | Comments (2)

## Under the Sand

Tuesday, April 1, 2003

Watched UNDER THE SAND tonight, a French film that would have never been made in the US because it portrays the romantic life of a 50 year old woman.. a subject that no US studio would

---

touch (bet you can't name one movie where the leading role is a 50-something woman). Women's roles (despite the actual age of the actor) in US movies either have to be under 40 and "still" sexy or over 60 and grandmotherly.

The movie stars Charlotte Rampling, who played a vividly schizophrenic woman in Woody Allen's STARDUST MEMORIES.

Filed in Film | Comments (3)

## Pull My Finger

Sunday, March 30, 2003

My days as a concert pianist are over.

Last night Susana and I made freshly squeezed orange juice. Hours later, while we were waiting to go out with Christene and Dave, I was washing the dishes and when scrubbing our big Henckel Five-Star chef's knife of dried orange juice pulp, my hand slipped and the knife sliced open my right-hand index finger. If there's one thing I learned about first aid, it's to apply direct pressure to any bleeding. But this thing was deep.

Susana drove me to Swedish medical center in Ballard where we waited for an hour to be looked at, then another hour to be treated. I asked the nurse how the night was going and he said it was all the usual suspects--people have more time on their hands on the weekend to get into trouble. And later there would be a wave of drunks who tripped over curbs. Last night he had a guy get injured getting into the trunk of his car (so you know he was tanked) and the nurse guessed it was a Ford.. the drunk said "how'd you know?" but it was because the nurse could see the "Fo" from the Ford nameplate imprinted on his forehead.

The doctor came in, diagnosed the situation and said flatly, "Stitches".

Then he pulled out a 5 inch needle and said "This is gonna hurt. Are you ready?" Luckily Susana was there to make funny faces at me while he stuck this needle in my hand four separate times causing overwhelming pain as I felt it passing through various tendons and muscles.

After that the hand was asleep and we talked as the doctor used his crochet tools on my finger. He started complaining about the state of healthcare--a rightfully contentious issue among doctors--and how 60% of what my insurance will be paying is going to the uninsured patients in the next room, but by law they must evaluate and stabilize everyone who comes in. He was on a roll.. so we got him off of it when he talked about Brazil.

Meanwhile Christene and Dave were making dinner at our house for us..

Filed in Real Life

## Breadcrumbs

Saturday, March 29, 2003

Here's an article on breadcrumbs:

Breadcrumb Navigation: An Exploratory Study of Usage which says that while breadcrumbs may be useful for telling users where they are in a site, are not clicked very often. The back button still reigns.

## Smart Home, Dumb Idea

Thursday, March 27, 2003

This NY Times article, *With Wires in the Walls*, the Cyberhome, talks about "smart" homes. I just bought a digital thermostat, and in addition to our lights-on-a-timer, we're fairly with the times. Why would someone need to go online to adjust their thermostat from work? The only thing I'm really looking for is a device to hook my stereo up to my LAN to receive streaming music or play mp3s from my PC.

You can spend several hundreded thousands dollars to create a fully produced experience: They now have video screens in most rooms and a tiny camera over the crib in the baby's room. If the baby cries, the music in the networked audio system fades and the video screen tunes in.

But why think about this when there's a war going on?

Filed in Technology

## New Tasty and Amazing

Thursday, March 27, 2003

I have a weblog. I'm calling it "what i know" which was inspired by the following quote.

"There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know."

&mdash; Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, clarifying US policy on the war on terror at a Pentagon briefing.

Filed in Weblogs | Comments (2)