Bet You Missed It/ Press Clippings / In the News

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Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths
Column Editor, Rosann Bazirjian (Syracuse University)

Ed note: I want to publicly thank all of the people who read, read, read in order to provide us with Bet You Missed It, especially Rosann Bazirjian who tirelessly puts it all together! Thank you all. We really appreciate it!

“Churchmouse” Takes On New Meaning by Bill Mingin (Lange & Springer Scientific Booksellers)

Lingua Franca reports that monks of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance (Trappists) in Virginia, North Carolina and Kentucky are creating an electronic index to Johns Hopkins Medical School Archives and a retrospective conversion of Yale University’s undergraduate library. Edward M. Leonard, a former computer company executive, was hired two years ago by the order at Holy Cross Abbey in Berryville, VA., to design software for their fruitcake mail-order business. He founded the Electronic Scriptorium, Ltd., which links monks with customers, primarily academic institutions. Benedictine monks are required to perform some manual labor as part of their rule and to sustain the monastery. Programming and indexing is less seasonal than fruitcake sales, less physically demanding, and more profitable (although the monks, of course, have a vow of poverty). For the past ten months, Brother Benjamin of the Gethsemani Abbey near New Haven, Kentucky, has been writing a program to rationalize access to the Hopkins medical archives. He notes that the cloistered life cuts down on distractions from work — except, of course, for prayer and meditation.

For libraries with like projects, a computer-age Scriptorium awaits. But they don’t do illuminated capitals.


Pick Up Your NWW and Go Lippincott by Twyla Racz (Eastern Michigan U.)

“New World Writing” (NWW) founded in 1952 by New American Library (NAL) was a literary anthology and little magazine that published new and experimental writers, i.e., Heller and Kerouac, in addition to well-known authors. On the practical side it gave NAL the inside track on publishing the paperback editions of NWW writers. In 1959, due to declining orders, competition, and other interests of the editors, NWW ceased to be published by NAL and became part of the Lippincott paperback line.

According to the author, a librarian at the State University of New York at Cortland, “perhaps, no other attempt in the history of American book publishing was more successful in presenting an array of new works by novelists, poets and critics to a popular American audience”.


Publishing and the Third World by Twyla Racz (Eastern Michigan University)

Professor Altbach has published previous books and articles on education and publishing in the Third World. In this article he stresses how important a successful book publishing industry is to the cultural development of the African nations. He enumerates the myriad of problems: languages, distribution, technology, multinationals, copyright, that must be overcome in order to achieve this goal. Suggestions to address these concerns are given. The author notes that “only African publishers... will be able to create a successful book industry”.


Many offices have employees who are in general good workers, but they share a common irritating trait — they chronically complain.

Their common traits? — Afraid to come to the boss because they assume management doesn’t care; under challenged in their work and feel they are not given the authority they deserve; idealistic, thus disillusioned by the reality of the working world; perfectionists who drive themselves and their co-workers too hard (the “I have to clean up after everybody” type).

What plan of action can a supervisor take to de-claw their chronic complainers? Help focus them — deal with the big picture and the quality of the complainer’s work. Don’t insist on specificity — if they can’t put their finger directly on the problem, don’t discount it. Set aside regular complaint sessions, one on one. Put the complainer in your shoes and ask what they would do if they were in charge. Wait until the person has cooled off before confronting the problem. When you ultimately reach a resolution, confirm it by paraphrasing. Finally, find a way to follow up on the complaint and make the employee feel that it was legitimate.


September 1993 / Against the Grain
**Empower to the People**  
by Marie Swearingen-Black  
(Syracuse University)

EMPOWERMENT...we've all heard of it, but does it scare us away?  
Many businesses, both large and small, are now moving over to this new approach to management. Simply put, they are decentralizing the decision-making process. "It's an idea that makes most bosses squirm, but letting people manage themselves can help raise quality and boost a company's bottom line." By giving our staff members both the necessary training and the authority to manage their own jobs, studies are showing a dramatic increase in job satisfaction and productivity.

What other possible benefits can be achieved through empowerment of employees? Team building, improved performance (who else is in a better position to improve performance), less resistance to change and allowing managers to develop long-term planning strategies while the workers are doing today's jobs, are just a few of the benefits mentioned. "Self-managed workers have to learn more about the company and how it works rather than just come in and punch a time clock," Sounds like improved morale to me.

How does a company implement a successful empowerment program? Suggested guidelines to develop and follow include gaining employees' trust, allowing the employees to develop confidence in decision making without fear of retribution, and employees must develop a sense of responsibility for their company. But one of the most important keys to successful implementation is a hard one — the managers themselves must DELEGATE — give the power to the employees.

Who are some of the big-name companies that have adopted this management system? Federal Express, Motorola, Xerox, Wal-Mart and Nordstrom are among those mentioned, as well as Saturn — General Motor's new car division which boasts of having one of the most highly self-managed labor forces in the manufacturing area.

See - "When Workers Run the Show" in Working Woman, August, 1993, p. 38.

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**Superhighway or Dead End?**  
by Sandy Beehler  
(Cornell University)

Talk of a national network using technology to turn TV into an interactive medium has always hung up on two questions: who will build the "superhighway" and what role will government play? The recent deal made by US West, the regional telephone company, to buy a 25% stake in Time Warner Entertainment makes it imperative that these questions be addressed soon. Where once it was thought that telephone companies and cable companies would be competing to provide this service, this deal and other similar ones (though on a smaller scale) make it clear that it is in the best interest of both parties to collaborate in order to provide both the technical skill and the funds to build fiber-optic networks. The prospect of this collaboration raises regulatory problems. Such mergers may run afoul of both the 1982 Cable Act and the specific terms of the 1984 consent decree that set up the Baby Bells. It is up to the government to facilitate regulatory reform so that the national network can become a reality.


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**All the Trade that's Fit to Tariff**  
by Sandy Beehler  
(Cornell University)

The good news out of the Tokyo trade summit between America, Japan, Canada and the European Community is that tariffs for most manufactured goods will be cut by a third, tariffs for some protected categories (glass and textiles) by half, and other tariffs will be dropped completely. However, the most important achievement may have been the show of genuine commitment to the Uruguay round of GATT, now in progress. Two highly controversial areas of trade agreement — agriculture and services — remained unresolved. Other sensitive areas still to be addressed include stronger intellectual property laws and antidumping rules, in which the U.S. has particular interest. The Tokyo talks may have given it new momentum, but the hardest work remains to be done before the December deadline facing the Uruguay round. See - "Playing to the Balconies" in The Economist, July 10, 1993, p. 57-58.

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**Changing of the Guard**  
by Rosann Bazirjian  
(Syracuse University)

This article excerpts portions of an interview with Lou Gerstner, the new CEO of IBM. He discusses how he is acquainting himself with IBM, and its prospects for the future. He describes a four-part strategy he will undertake, for the short term, to get the company back on its feet: 1) get the company right-sized (may include lay-offs); 2) spend more time with the customers; 3) figure out the strategic issues which need handling and resolve them; 4) work on improving employee morale and incentives. Gerstner is convinced that it is time for "IBM to perform and then talk", instead of the other way around. This is a short article by David Kirkpatrick, however, it does give you an inside look at a new, very important man at IBM.


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**Profile of John Sculley**  
by Rosann Bazirjian  
(Syracuse University)

Alan Deutschman gives his readers an in-depth view of John Sculley, ex-CEO of Apple Computer. His workaholic attitude abruptly ended on June 18, 1993 when he resigned as CEO. He still remains chairman however. The article is about Sculley's successes and addresses the question of why he decided to leave in the middle of his five-year plan for Apple. His desire to no longer "keep a killer schedule" may have been only part of it. Michael Spindler has been named the new CEO. Whether this new arrangement works, Deutschman suggests, will depend on whether Sculley really wants it to work. A retrospective of Sculley's career follows, with a reminder that his achievements must not be underestimated. He brought Apple's sales from $983 million to $8 billion. "Now Apple is just as big as Pepsi was back in 1983."

See - "Odd Man Out" by Alan Deutschman in Fortune, vol. 128 (2) (July 26, 1993), p. 42-56.
Oooh-bladee-ooh-bladah  
by Sandy Beehler  
(Cornell University)

The recent deal between BT, Britain’s telecoms giant, and MCI, America’s long distance telecom company, has significant gains for both parties. BT has been looking for a partner to help expand its global telecom services to multinationals and has long sought access to the American market, which is now possible through MCI. The venture makes MCI an international player, with the ability to expand its data-transmission and wireless communications services, and to develop new services such as interactive multimedia.


But What Happens to the Paper Girl?  
by Sandy Beehler  
(Cornell University)

CW holds that there is little future for the newspaper, as more and more people rely on TV news. But Roger Fidler, head of Knight-Ridder Information Design Laboratory, is working on a product that would retain many features of the traditional newspaper but in a different medium — in this case a “tablet,” a high-definition touch-sensitive screen that could be carried in a briefcase. Enhancements would include the ability to jump from page to page instantly, to call up individual items in greater detail (or larger print), to have the news read aloud to you, or to save stories in memory storage.


Software or “Meatware”?  
by Sandy Beehler  
(Cornell University)

While scientists and engineers depend on information, wading through the mass of information available on thousands of databases can absorb enormous amounts of time. Teltech research Network Corporation of Minneapolis uses “meatware” (i.e., people) to extract useful knowledge for its clients. “Knowledge analysts” take questions over the phone and search any of 1600 databases to which Teltech has access for pertinent information. The company also has a network of experts contracted to answer customers’ questions within 24 hours. In addition, they will locate sources of materials needed by industry. Customers say that their profits from the service are an average of 16 times its cost. Cost includes a monthly subscription of $200-$500, depending on the size of the company, and a per-call fee. In a pilot project in Minnesota, the state subsidized Teltech’s services to smaller companies, raising hopes that a similar effort by the federal government would reap great benefit for America’s small businesses and thus the economy. Teltech is branching out, targeting the defense industry to help contractors switch from traditional military products to civilian markets. It is also working hard to automate its services, introducing “KnowledgeScope,” which lets customers browse through a special database to locate Teltech experts. Teltech’s excellence at filling an information need explains why more than half of America’s largest companies subscribe to its services.


EMU’s Bumpy Ride  
by Sandy Beehler  
(Cornell University)

The coming into force of the Maastricht Treaty this year heralds phase two of EMU, the establishment of a European Monetary Institute which will recommend monetary policy, develop the use of the ecu, improve payments’ systems and plan for ecu banknotes and coinage. However, the EC’s members are far from agreement on how phase two should work. Arguing that the exchange-rate mechanism is incompatible with the abolition of capital controls, allowing speculative attacks against currencies, Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa, drafter of the Delors report on EMU in 1989, suggests gradual movement to a common monetary policy coordinated by the EMI. The Bundesbank, Germany’s central bank, supports a stronger federal government for the EC, holding that the “monetary union can only survive in a political union.” The coming revision of the EC treaty in 1996 would be crucial to the completion of monetary union. Meanwhile, preparations for phase two have begun. A committee of central bank governors is working on organizing the EMI. The Community is still discussing its location. Ecofin (the EC’s committee of finance ministers) has already approved the monetary policies of 8 of the 12 members. Ecofin must also pass several laws designed to limit government monetary actions. The brightest hope for the future appears to be the coming change in presidency of the Bundesbank; the new president is expected to be more sympathetic towards EMU.


My Citation’s Better Than Yours  
by Pamela Rose  
(SUNY at Buffalo)

Citation analysis, pioneered by Eugene Garfield and the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), is raising strong feelings among researchers who criticize the process as a dangerously mechanical way to evaluate publication quality, let alone decide who gets tenure. Nevertheless, citation rankings are being used for tenure evaluation, promotion decisions and resource allocation. University of Alberta geneticist R. C. von Borstel characterizes the process as “... too narrow an indicator of scientific merit” and “... a bean counter approach.” Nature editor John Maddox values lists of citations about as much as the weight of those cited papers in grams. Scientists point out specific technical problems that can skew the rankings, and that even accurate rankings are not good measures of originality. ISI staffers agree that citation rankings are not useful for evaluating individuals; however, they stress that unlike other measures of scientific impact, it is concrete rather than anecdotal, and defend its value in comparing departments or institutions, and in identifying trends. The increasing complexity of science will only serve to keep citation analysis at center stage, which makes it doubly important to remember that it is “a database, not a religion”.

On Your Own Dime
by Pamela Rose
(State University of New York at Buffalo)

The upgrading of NSFNET, the National Science Foundation's "backbone" computer network which connects two dozen regional science and education networks, will eventually force researchers to tie into commercial networks "on their own dime."

However, the government's National Research and Education Network (NREN) will also be left in an awkward position. Initial plans called for NREN to take over from NSFNET in 1996; revised plans will be to develop a limited access version of the envisioned national gigabit network. A $330 million bill currently in Congress proposes development of digital libraries, virtual reality technology, medical databases and visualization techniques over 5 years. Researchers are understandably upset, and Bruce Schatz of the University of Arizona warns forcing people to spend extra dollars to hook up to a commercial network could stifle a spawning revolution in remote research collaboration. NSFNET director Stephen Wolff defends the new model as a shift from "top down" to "bottom up" support for research networking as the government will subsidize the use of commercial networks through charge backs to NSF grants and university indirect cost accounts. Researchers, no longer the majority of network traffic, will help pay the price of the uncertain networking future.


The Handwritten Context
by Pamela Rose
(State University of New York at Buffalo)

State University of New York at Buffalo researchers unveiled at a handwriting recognition conference in May a writing recognition process that nearly doubles the accuracy of previous systems. Rohini Srinivasa's group developed a new system using a series of probabilities "statistical grammar" to identify words by their context. Once a conventional pass has generated a list of candidate words, the context-based system eliminates 60% of the guesses on a first pass, and then narrows the choice on a second pass. However, the conventional system must at least list the correct word for the context-based system to choose. Apple's Kai-Fu Lee notes the use of context will be a key technique for handwritten computer communication.


A CORE Collection
by Pamela Rose
(State University of New York at Buffalo)

Virtual libraries are here. CORE, the Chemistry Online Retrieval Experiment had its debut at Cornell University on April 21, 1993. Other projects are under development at Carnegie-Mellon University (TULIP), Naval Research Laboratory, and Columbia University. The CORE system provides full text retrieval of imprinted page format, including pictures, tables, graphs and captions, of over 20,000 articles from 20 American Chemical Society (ACS) journals from January 1991 - September 1992. The ability to store the massive amounts of data necessary to handle this graphic material makes such systems possible, but whether researchers will be satisfied with the speed and ease of use remains to be seen. Some are concerned that bullet-type retrieval will rob science of spontaneous discoveries gleaned from browsing, although tables-of-contents can be scanned online. Others note that it's hard to flip through screens of pages of large articles. And of course publishers are nervous about loss of circulation. One thing is certain; users still love to print out even their e-mail, so virtual libraries will not eliminate cluttered offices.


It's Not Just Something to Eat: The Final Frontier
by Pamela Rose
(SUNY at Buffalo)

How do you establish trust in the easily altered text of a computer? Stuart Haber and Scott Stornetta have answered by co-inventing digital time-stamping, which can prove a document existed in a specific form at a particular time. Their system uses a mathematical procedure called a one-way hash function, which boils long strings of characters down to shorter, random looking character strings with no clue as to the input, but is unique at the moment in time it is created. The problem then is to store the hash value securely. Haber and Stornetta's solution is to attach a copy of each document's hash value and time-stamp to the next document submitted for time-stamping, thus each document's time-stamp affects the next one. Subsequent development with Barnard College's Dave Baird found an approach that issues a "time-stamp certificate" to each party, then blends all time-stamp requests for a given time period into a more compact kind of tree which is then published in a newspaper (Bellcore's experimental effort is currently published in The New York Times Metro section). Rutgers University Librarian Peter Graham notes: "With a book we take it for granted [that the text is authentic]. With an electronic book we don't."

Stornetta notes clever programmers may catch up with a particular hash function, but as long as they can periodically use new hash functions and stay ahead of the challenges, time-stamping could become as routine as backup files.

See - "Electronic Time-stamping; the Notary Public Goes Digital" by Barry Cipra in Science, vol. 261 (5118) (July 9, 1993).

Violence Against Machines
by Katina Strauch
(College of Charleston)

Okay. This historical article is a change of pace from our normal techne reading. It's about history as early machines emerged and how workers reacted to them and it's also about the present. It's about Luddites and neo-Luddites. It's about people frustrated by their machines. I like it.

See - "For a While, the Luddites Had a Smashing Success" by Bruce Watson in Smithsonian, April 1993, pages 140-154.
Novell Versus Microsoft: Battle of the Giants
by Rosann Bazirjian
(Syracuse University)

Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple Computers, is predicting that "what personal computers were to the Eighties, networking will be to the nineties." This article discusses the battle taking place between Microsoft and Novell over who will reign as the network giant. Microsoft, already the king of software, is about to battle it out with Novell, which is currently responsible for the proliferation of corporate computer networks. In order to compete in the networking market, Microsoft will be coming out with an operating system software called Windows NT; their replacement for DOS. This system will be able to supervise networks as well as desktop PC's. This new system is powerful enough to handle large software programs which businesses want to download from mainframes onto PC networks. Novell, however, would like to combine its Netware operating system for networks with other Novell software to run desktops that are now using Microsoft. Novell has also recently purchased Unix for $322 million. The article continues on in great depth to not only discuss the ensuing battle, but to give the reader a good understanding of network versus PC software functions.

See - "Novell Faces the Battle of Its Life" by Brian O'Reilly in *Fortune*, vol.128 (3) (August 9, 1993), p. 81-85.

From Sea to Shining Sea — We Can Make a Market in Japan
by Rosann Bazirjian
(Syracuse University)

U.S. makers of personal computers are finally beginning to feel they can open up a market for their products in Japan. At this point in time, U.S. companies only have 15% of Japan's electronic market, however, this may soon change. Problems in the past, with incompatibility have been resolved, and the higher prices once afforded are now a thing of the past. Microsoft's new Japanese language Windows has eliminated the problem of incompatibility. In Japan, it has now sold 440,000 copies, and the future looks promising. Bill Gates describes the product as fully bilingual, and indicates that it can run on any manufacturer's hardware. In terms of pricing, new lower priced PC's by both Compaq and Dell have forced the Japanese to reduce prices. Prior to their emergence, Japanese PC prices were 50% higher than the rest of the world, with $2900 being the average. The prospect of changing this is great. This article describes in depth the nature of the Japanese computer business, and summarizes changes that are on the horizon.

See - "U.S. PCs Invade Japan" by Brenton R. Schleider in *Fortune*, vol. 128 (1) (July 12, 1993), p. 68-73.

A Chip Off the Old Block
by Sarah Tusa
(Lamar University)

A partnership comprised of IBM, Motorola and Apple Corp., has produced a new computer chip that seeks to compete with Intel's Pentium chip and to challenge Intel's share of the computer chip market in general. The new chip, called PowerPC uses the advanced RISC technology and has the advantage of being half the size of the Intel chip and thus carrying a smaller price. A part of the market that this will immediately capture is the Apple Macintosh, since it will replace the 68000 chip "over the next two years." The PowerPC does face some obstacles in its pursuit of a bigger chunk of the PC market. The most daunting seems to be lack of big-company support. Microsoft, for example, is skeptical of the new chip's ability to run NT, and it is hence holding back. There also is some question regarding PowerPC's "lack of software compatibility" in general. However, Motorola is launching a record campaign for the chip, and other markets are already opening to it as well. For example, there are plans for using it in interactive video and in engine control for new cars. Intel, which has long been heavily supported by IBM is gearing up to head off the competition at the pass.


The Way of All Messages
by Katina Strauch
(College of Charleston)

You have to be careful what you say, even on the Internet. There are a lot of computer programs out there and some of them are designed to wipe out what you say if it doesn't meet certain guidelines. And this leads to the battle between those who advocate freedom of expression and those who feel that their management role of computer bulletin boards and the like behooves them to be censors. This has led to scenarios where messages from certain users have been canceled or the original sender's name has been stripped off the message before it is sent on the Internet. Just who is responsible for messages on bulletin boards? The lawyers are sharpening their briefs.


All the On-Line That's Fit to Buy
by Katina Strauch
(College of Charleston)

Paul Allen, who founded Microsoft with Bill Gates, is on the move. This article reports how Mr. Allen is "quietly assembling a little empire of futuristic media companies." His latest interest has been America Online (competitors include CompuServe, Genie, and Prodigy).


Your Television — Or is it Your Computer — is Watching You!
by Katina Strauch
(College of Charleston)

Wow. Here it is. A vision of the future courtesy of William F. Buckley, Jr. and David Rothman. Pointing to "the growing indifference to printed matter, and ... the high cost of library service ..." Mr. Buckley discusses "TeleRead" which "would become everyone's personal library." The scenario includes passwords, taxes on television sets, subscription fees based on family incomes, and authors' compensation based on the frequency their books are read. Brave new library.