Bet You Missed It -- Press Clippings -- In the News -- Carefully Selected by Your Crack Team of News Sleuths

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WHEN CASH COWS RUN DRY 
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Internet advertising and books online have cut into media companies’ profits from traditional cash cows TV ads and paperbacks, leaving giants like Viacom and Bertelsmann desperate for growth. They are responding by diversification. Bertelsmann has been building its services division Arvato which runs printing presses, repairs mobile phones and stores medicine for a wide range of clients.


JOURNALS ARE MAGAZINES, NOT HOLY SCRUTURE 
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Tom Stossel, American Cancer Society professor at Harvard Medical School decries the AMA Journal’s demonization of drug companies and their research with specific reference to Merck and Vioxx. In the Journal’s Manchester world view, drug companies are demons, medical academics are saints.

But, he says, many of his academic colleagues “would run over their grandparents to claim priority for a discovery, impose their pet theory on the field, obtain a research grant, win an award or garner a promotion.”

The drug companies operate under tough FDA review where the Korean cloning fraud — published in prestige journals — would never have occurred. Top journals can reject a lot of submissions because herd behavior gets them a lot of submissions. “That’s brand creation — not science.”


THE BLACKBERRY SPAT IS NOW THE NORM 
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Want to defeat a patent claim? Just find one example of “prior art” — a reference to similar technology that was publicly available. A Rube Goldberg cartoon defeated a patent application for a dog food dispenser that dumped food when the dog jerked a chain attached to its collar.

An inventor laying claim to bar code technology was beaten by a cover of MAD magazine showing a huge bar code and the caption “MAD hopes this issue jams every computer in the country.” It was used to prove that bar coding was part of Americana long before the inventor’s claim. The vital April 1978 issue was found on eBay and attached to an appellate brief.

An applicant for a patent is now required to attach examples of prior art and assist the patent office in its searches. The Web has opened up university archives, out-of-print textbooks, and international patent filings — all at the touch of the fingertips.


HOT UNTIL IT’S NOT 
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

O.J. Simpson books were hot and then they were not. Angels were hot. Then not. So how long can the Da Vinci Code and its ilk continue to be milked? Doubleday has kept it in hardback for three years! Dan Brown reprints are going strong along with Da Vinci-related subjects like Templars.

And now comes the movie and the paperback edition by Anchor Books. And the illustrated screenplay by Doubleday.


GOOGLING GOOGLE’S BALANCE SHEET 
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Investors adore Google and are busy driving its stock price up. But they’re overlooking a growing number of restricted shares and options doled out to those Google worker bees.

To draw talent in a competitive market, Google is offering a close cousin of stock options called “performance-based stock units.” They are valued at the price at the time of issuance. So if those worker bees hold on, their value rises, and Google is on the hook to buy them from the bees at the future higher value. The obligation is around $600 million at this point.


YOU’VE READ DANIELLE STEELE; NOW READ HER FIFTH HUSBAND 
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Tom Perkins, a 73-year-old Silicon Valley financier and fifth hubby of blockbuster author Danielle Steele has penned Sex and the Single Zillionaire about an investment banker in a TV dating show. It’s all Manhattan penthouses, lavish yachts and exotic tropical isles. And sex of course. Published by ReganBooks. No doubt it helped that Perkins sits on the board of News Corp which owns high-profile publisher Judith Regan’s imprint, and he’s buddies with Rupert Murdoch who “suggested” Judith take a look at the manuscript.

Meanwhile, Bertelsmann AG’s Delacorte Press is bringing out Dannie’s 66th novel with an initial press run of 800,000 copies. Mind you, she was only married to Tom for seventeen months — long enough for him to inspire a character in her 1988 The Klone and I: A High Tech Love Story — but they “remain friends” and are “a bit competitive.”

Barnes & Noble’s chief merchant Bob Wietrack says Steele’s book is a sure thing, but while Perkin’s book will be offered in all 824 stores, they want to see how readers react.