April 1995

Bet You Missed It

Rosanne Bazirjian
Syracuse University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>

Recommended Citation

Bazirjian, Rosanne (1995) "Bet You Missed It," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 7: Iss. 2, Article 16.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1728>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Bet You Missed It

**Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully
Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths**

Column Editor: **Rosann Bazirjian**
(Syracuse University)

The Seamless Interface by **Sandy Beehler** (Cornell University)

Edward Tufte, the "reigning guru of information design," talks about the inefficiency of the way most computer screen designs display information. Display screens currently work at data densities about 1/10th those of a page of text. Tufte (whose name is represented in the article by an icon of his face) doesn't think much of icons but conceded that the Mac is "most of the way there" when it comes to interface. The challenge is to present the computer's capabilities in an efficient way so that users don't have to dig too deeply to get to where they want to be. He would junk the paradigm of operation systems and applications and

would end the segregation of text and graphics. He also claims most users don't have the time to learn all the features of their computer — what they need is easier access to those features. Tufte describes great design as having the quality of revelation. Pointing to one of **Galileo's** original works which employs a drawing of Saturn where the world would normally appear in its text, Tufte predicts that "real soon now" interfaces will be as seamless as they used to be 400 years ago.

See — "Envisioning Interfaces" in **Wired**, August, 1994, p. 60.

Economics of Information by **Sarah Tusa** (Lamar University)

According to a recent **Business Week** article, the U.S. has shifted from the service economy of the 1980's to an information economy, and most of the news is good. For example, whereas service goods were not as exportable as manufactured goods, overseas sales of information technology equipment has surpassed that of aircraft — traditionally our top export industry — by \$29 billion. Furthermore, information technology is boosting productivity and providing pay gains of 12% to 21% for male and female computer programmers, respectively. The declining costs of information technology equipment also has the potential to keep overall interest rates lower in the future, as industries are able to borrow less money to finance the purchase of

this kind of equipment. The article points out several reasons why government statistics under-report the output and benefits of this economic force. Essentially, many elements of growth in information technology are overlooked by traditional economic indicators. Finally, one pitfall in the shift from a service economy to the information economy is the loss of jobs for unskilled workers. However, information retrieval industries are growing and creating new jobs and making it easier to find employment. In conclusion, the article compares the future impact of the information technology on the nation's economy with that of the arrival of electricity.

See — **Business Week**, no. 3372 (May 18, 1994).

Story of the Gate(s)keeper by **Rosann Bazirjian** (Syracuse University)

This is a fascinating profile of **Bill Gates**, the man and his corporation. The author tells us that Bill Gates, a man whose net worth is about 9 million dollars, would like to transform **Microsoft** from a maker of "packaged goods" to something more like a "utility company." Microsoft software must go beyond our desktops and into "the guts of the information economy" with a focus not only on entertainment packages, but where it really counts, in business. Gates proposes that **Windows** will be at the center of the information

highway, and since **Windows** was introduced in 1990, annual profits have quadrupled. The article continues to discuss Bill Gates from the beginning — as a student in high school to his days at Harvard. We are given portraits of his "team" and the basic philosophy behind his business. All in all, a very, very interesting article.

See — "What Bill Gates Really Wants" by **Brent Schlender** in **Fortune**, vol. 131 (1) (January 16, 1995), p. 34-63.

"Hyper-Libraries" for Britain? by **Sandy Beehler** (Cornell University)

Public libraries in Britain, where circulation has dropped by 14% in the last ten years, are facing a crisis. The Department of National Heritage is considering two reports on what to do about it. The first, by KPMG Peat Marwick and Capital Planning Information, recommends contracting out of library services. The second, by ASLIB, an independent consulting firm, suggests several solutions, including longer hours, access to electronic

sources of information, more involvement in adult literacy and the opening of mini-libraries in railway stations and airports as well as regional "hyper-libraries." Unfortunately, funding for these ideas is not a high priority with government. The author concludes that libraries "will have to become entrepreneurial or die."

See — "Borrowed Time," in **The Economist**, December 10, 1994.

The Radiation File by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

The Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments (ACHRE), created by Department of Energy Secretary **Hazel O'Leary**, has compiled documents relating to more than 1000 secret government radiation experiments on human subjects. ACHRE staffers are creating a user-friendly database to provide researchers access to the records, and Senator **John Glenn** (D-OH), outgoing chair of the Sen-

ate Committee on Governmental Affairs, will suggest that the Administration create a records review board similar to the one that oversees files relating to the assassination of **John F. Kennedy**.

See — "Glenn to Call for Human Radiation Library" in "ScienceScope" section edited by **Richard Stone**, in *Science*, vol. 266, December 2, 1994, p. 1467.

The Visible Man by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

Male cadavers are online! The Visible Man, a set of thousands of digitized images made by scanning, slicing and photographing every inch of a frozen human male cadaver is online, sent into cyberspace by the **National Library of Medicine (NLM)**. Access information can be obtained from NLM's project director

Michael Ackerman at ackerman@hpcc.gov. The Visible Woman will be available in late 1995.

See — "Anatomy On-Line" in "Random Samples" edited by **Constance Holden** in *Science* vol. 266, December 2, 1994, p. 1483.

The Internet Top Ten by Sandy Beehler (Cornell University)

without overwhelming you. Highlights: a definitive list of Internet mailing lists: **Stephanie DaSilva's Lists of Lists** (FTP from rtfm.mit.edu in the pub/

This article presents a selection of "the best stuff for beginners on the Internet." The choices are divided into six categories: E-mail; Usenet; Gopher; World-Wide Web; Books; and The Rest. With 5 or 6 entries in each category, it's enough to get you started

usenet/news.answer/mail/mailling-lists directory. WARNING: this is a big file! the best place to ask dumb questions: news.new-users.questions: a tool to search the Web: WebCrawler <http://www.bio-tech.washington.edu/Web-Crawler/Web-Query.html>. And the author's pick for most valuable site on the Internet: MIT's archive of FAQ files, etc. (FTP to rtfm.mit.edu in pub/usenet/news.answers directory.) Unfortunately, I couldn't figure out how to get to a couple of these with the information given in the article, so others may also have to have expert help to find these sources.

See — "The Best of the Lot" in *Internet World*, January, 1995, p. 20.

How Well Am I Doing? by Marie Swearingen (Syracuse University)

For many organizations, the beginning of the calendar year is the time of year for the dreaded PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS! It doesn't necessarily need to be a nail-biting/hair-raising experience or one full of surprises. How can you as a supervisor/manager make the annual event a productive one? **Joseph D. O'Brian** provides many clues for making the performance appraisal a very effective opportunity. First of all, he suggests when performance evaluation time rolls around, it should be seen as the opportune time to sell yourself to the boss. Characteristics of a well-managed appraisal include solicited evaluation of your performance from both your peers and subordinates. Feedback from these two groups can be valuable,

although different techniques for getting useful information should be followed. O'Brian lists many helpful hints for getting the information you desire from both employees and colleagues. Guidelines suggested include questions to be included on a written appraisal questionnaire distributed to appropriate personnel as well as informal verbal communication. Also provided are good ideas on dealing with your supervisor to ensure you are on track between the appraisal periods.

See — "Getting a Complete Picture of Your Performance" by **Joseph D. O'Brian** in *Supervisory Management*, December, 1994, p. 3.

Surfing Techniques by Sandy Beehler (Cornell University)

This article contains tips from some of the "Grand Masters" in searching the Internet. To keep track of what's going on in the net, one searcher recommends the net-happenings mailing list (subscribe by sending 'subscribe net-happenings' message to majordomo@is.internic.net). **Gopher Jewels** (gopher to cwis.usc.edu) is another favorite spot. To find locations of information on a specific topic, **Veronica** and its younger relative **Jughead** employ Boolean searching techniques to generate a list of gopher sites related to the topic desired. Because of traffic problems, one master-searcher suggests accessing European Veronicas and gophers to get a quicker response. **Macintosh's TurboGopher** is also very useful. Keeping track of the treasures once you locate them is another problem which can be effectively solved by creating and storing **Gopher bookmarks**. The bookmarks provide a shortcut back to your favorite sources. When it comes to getting human help, the Internet helps you locate experts in several ways: fac-

ulty directories on university Gophers, an MIT mail server that records electronic mail addresses from messages posted to newsgroups, or listservs to which a direct inquiry for help can be sent. FAQ files could give you a fast answer to questions. FAQ files for most Internet groups are available by anonymous FTP from rtfm.mit.edu. Listservs and newsgroups (and their archives) are a valuable source of information on many topics. Several lists of useful Internet sites are suggested, including **Scott Yanoff's** list (gopher to gopher.uwm.edu and select remote information servers/Special Internet connections) and another called the **Awesome List** (<http://www.clark.net/pub/journalism/awesome.html>) that allows searchers to jump to any other listed resource. A final suggestion: if you can't find it on the net, create it and put it in yourself.

See — "Secrets of the Surfing Searchers" in *Internet World*, January, 1995, p. 50.

The War Wages On by Rosann Bazirjian (Syracuse University)

This is an interesting article focusing on the software Lotus Notes and its lock on corporate America. Microsoft, a \$4-billion-a-year software business is unable to compete, although they plan to launch a "Notes-buster" called Microsoft Exchange. Yet, the author claims that for all the ferocity with which Microsoft is approaching this, it "can't stop customers from loving Notes." The article continues with a description of the Lotus Notes software and how it operates. Indi-

viduals from International Data Corp., Price Waterhouse and Compaq discuss how they are utilizing the software in their firms. The article continues with a long history of the development of Lotus Notes and the battle Microsoft is waging.

See — "Why Microsoft Can't Stop Lotus Notes," by David Kirkpatrick in *Fortune*, vol. 130 (12) (December 12, 1994), p. 141-157.

Internet Links with China by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

Two new gateways will provide Chinese researchers with a growing presence on the Internet, but at a price. The Chinese government's Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MPT) wants to manage the new hook-ups as a moneymaking enterprise, unlike the single connection available since last Spring through the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). Researchers are worried that the cost will put its use out of their reach. In addition,

there is a flap over the country-level domain name assigned by the Internet. Despite these and other problems with congestion due to increasing demand, researchers are being introduced to resources through the Internet.

See — "China to Triple Internet Links with Commercial Hookups" by Ted Plafker in *Science*, vol. 267, January 13, 1995, p. 168.

Business School Thrillers by Sandy Beehler (Cornell University)

Management theorists are using fiction to illustrate the latest management principles. Books like *The Goal*, a management text cast as fast-paced thriller, have sold 1.5 million copies since 1984, and have been translated into 18 languages. Other authors are quickly imitating its success. The world's first management trilogy has already hit the presses. Existing literary texts are also gaining popularity as management tools. Theorist Peter Drucker relates business alliances to dynastic marriages in Jane Austen novels. Sophocles' *Antigone* has also been used in a management course. The author suggests some

other likely choices: i.e. Macbeth to illustrate the dangers of over-zealous downsizing.

See — "Tales Out of Business School" in *The Economist*, January 21, 1995, p. 63.

Researching the Reader by Twyla Racz (Eastern Michigan University)

Dessauer, a noted authority on books and publishing, urges publishers to undertake reader research. Too little is still known, especially by the large firms, of what their readers want which leads to many book failures and profit loss. The smaller houses do publish for specialized markets. Reader research, however, is not market research which the author states views readers only as profit sources in addition to being manipulative. Reader re-

search would consist of two elements: basic research and title research. Undertaking these would cost the publishers money and require reorganization, but the reduction in book failures and the consequent economic rewards would be substantial.

See — "The Case for Reader Research" by John P. Dessauer in *Publishing Research Quarterly*, Fall, 1994, p. 4-8.

Importance of Research by Twyla Racz (Eastern Michigan University)

Noble presents a strong argument that there is a need for research on many aspects of publishing, especially the book publishing industry. The first priority, however, is to determine who will undertake the research. He offers no solutions but discusses the key issues in copyright, literacy, writing, the book publishing industry, suppliers, and distribution, bringing out the role technology currently has and can have. Some very interesting re-

search topics are suggested: feasibility of an author database; research on the linkage between literacy and productivity. The author is on the editorial board of *Publishing Research Quarterly* and is president of Noble Consultants, Inc.

See — "Priorities for Publishing Research" by J. Kendrick Noble, Jr., in *Publishing Research Quarterly*, Fall, 1994, p. 60-67.

The Education Top Ten by Sandy Beehler (Cornell University)

The author surveyed educators on two mailing lists (LM-NET and ED-TECH) to compile a list of top education-related sources. The winners: AskERIC; Cable News Network classroom edition online; IECC (Interna-

tional E-mail Classroom Connections); IECC-PROJECTS and IECC-DISCUSSION; Internet-on-a-disk; Kevin's Prairie Dog Town (Gopher to skynet.usask.ca); KIDSPHER; NATO; PENPALS; The Smithsonian; Stanford University (lots of shareware programs); U.S. Dept. of Education; and The White House. The article also lists two education-related guides available by FTP from nic.umass.edu (/pub/ednet/educatrs.lst and /pub/ednet/ edusenet.gde).

See — "The Best Education Resources" in *Internet World*, January, 1995, p. 40.