September 1996

Bet You Missed It

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Recommended Citation

Bazirjian, Rosann L. (1996) "Bet You Missed It," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 8: Iss. 4, Article 30.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2077>

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Bet You Missed It

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

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Where Are You? by Rosann Bazirjian (FSU)

This article summarizes the various computerized phone directories which are available to PC users. Both CD-ROM and Internet directories are evaluated for their price and comprehensiveness. Search strategies as well as privacy issues

are discussed. I found this a useful article as I am anxious to track down some old college friends and hope that the sources listed will help me. See — **Steve Kichen**, "PC411," *Forbes*, 157 (5) (March 11, 1996), p. 158-159.

I'm Still Waiting by Rosann Bazirjian (FSU)

This is an informative article about what to do when your PC breaks down. It was surprising to learn that according to a survey by *PC World* magazine, 11% of all new computer systems purchased come with at least one component which is not working. The author then goes on to state that after your computer "plays dead," fixing it can be a "truly horrific experience." The

reader is informed not to expect to reach a service representative via the telephone for at least 28 hours after starting to make calls! The rest of the article is filled with advice on how to troubleshoot your PC yourself and what to look for in a warranty when purchasing one. See — **Michael J. Himowitz**, "Surviving a PC Meltdown," *Fortune*, 133 (7), (April 15, 1996), p. 195-196.

The New BeBox by Rosann Bazirjian (FSU)

This article focuses on **Jean-Louis Gasee**, who has developed a new PC operating system which he is marketing as BeBox. This is an extremely powerful machine, and is being marketed to what Gasee defines as "geeks." Because it is based on an entirely new operating system, it will not run Macintosh or Windows software, and is therefore not being marketed to home PC users.

Gasee claims his ideal user "already owns two other computers, is familiar with UNIX, can program in C++... and spends a lot of time manipulating large graphics files with a program like Adobe Photoshop." The article speculates on the potential success of the BeBox. See — **Michael Noer**, "Calling All Geeks," *Forbes*, 157 (5) (March 11, 1996), p. 156.

Dissertations on Line? by Philip Dankert (Cornell University)

Will doctoral dissertations in the future be published on CD-ROMs? While approval was given to a doctoral candidate at the University of Texas to proceed with her dissertation in this format as a test case, skeptics question whether scholars 20 or 30 years from now will be able to gain access to them, given how rapidly technology is changing. It was noted that "for students the electronic dissertation can be

easier to prepare, more error free... and more flexible in format." Also, because this research will be available on the World Wide Web, it will not require shelf space in the library. See — **Katherine S. Mangan**, "CD-ROM Dissertations: Universities Consider Whether New Format is Appropriate Way to Present Research," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 8, 1996, p. A15, A19.

E-mail Filters by Rosann Bazirjian (FSU)

This is an amusing article filled with guidelines on how to filter out unwanted email messages. The author calls these filters "bozo filters." Per **Guy Kawasaki**, the following types of messages are not important and should be ignored: 1) writing in all caps (no one wants to get yelled at); 2) mail carbon copied to more than four people (someone else will take care of it); 3) email longer than five paragraphs (just read the first and last paragraphs — nothing in between is usually important); 4) mail with the following phrases: "First, a little bit of back-

ground about myself" or "For Immediate Release" (no one wants to hear someone else's life story or read a certain press release); 5) a signature longer than six lines (the signature is the "digital mirror of a person's soul" — people do not pay attention to it if it is too long, and; 6) any "suspicious" or "supercilious" email addressed (here he cites "edu" as an example, saying the message is probably from a student). See — **Guy Kawasaki**, "Bozo Filters," *Forbes*, 157 (6) (March 25, 1996), p. 120.

Internet Addiction by Philip Dankert (Cornell University)

Are college students spending too much time in front of their computers? Apparently the number is small but it is growing. Although the phenomenon of excessive computer use is too new to know whether it should be classified as a disorder similar to a gambling addiction, many health professionals suggest that it is simply a symptom of other problems such as depres-

sion. A few campuses are attempting to do something about the problem, although imposing time limits re computer use may not be a good idea in the opinion of at least one psychiatrist. See — **Thomas J. DeLoughry**, "Snared by the Internet: College Officials Debate Whether Students Spend Too Much Time on Line," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 1, 1996,

IBM's Comeback by Rosann Bazirjian (FSU)

This article focuses on the "comeback" of IBM, but questions how long this success will last. Thanks to **Louis Gerstner Jr.**, IBM has lowered its operating costs and has managed a \$6.3 billion profit. Much of their success has been due to the sales of a new mainframe product dubbed CMOS (Complementary metal-oxide semiconductor). IBM continues to sell main-

frames to customers such as banks, insurance companies and motor vehicle departments. However, the author questions how long IBM will be able to maintain a captive mainframe audience now that many large businesses are turning toward networks of servers. See — **David Churbeck** and **Gary Samuels**, "Can IBM Keep It Up?" *Forbes*, vol. 157 (11) (June 3, 1996), p. 142-144.

Libraries on the Internet by Sandy Beehler (Cornell University)

In two pages the author describes a number of library Web sites, along with some library news

groups and virtual library sites. See — "Cyberlibrarian," *Internet World*, July, 1996, p. 32.

The Gothic Influence by **Twyla Racz** (Eastern Michigan University)

"Poe is back" so writes **Mark Edmundson**, who teaches English at the University of Virginia. Explaining Gothic characteristics, he shows how these aspects have infiltrated our daily life through books,

TV and movies. It may have all begun with "The Silence of the Lambs." See — **Mark Edmundson**, "American Gothic," *Civilization*, vol. 3(3) (May/June 1996), p. 48-55.

Foreign Research by **Pamela Rose** (SUNY at Buffalo)

Universities have always relied heavily on foreign researchers, with over half of all U.S. postdoctoral positions filled by workers on temporary visas. If portions of an amendment to the immigration bill are reintroduced in the Senate and

the more extreme ones become law, the consequences for U.S. science could be disastrous. See — **James Glanz**, "Proposals That Would Limit Visas Strike Fear at Universities," *Science*, vol. 272 (April 12, 1996), p. 190-191.

Downsizing Formula by **Pamela Rose** (SUNY at Buffalo)

Using a "decision tree" to determine and preserve the best and most cost-effective programs, the **University of Rhode Island** is cutting departments to deal with a budgetary crisis. A "yes" answer to any of four questions ("Is the Program central to URI's mission?", "Do revenues significantly exceed costs?", "Is there strong continuing student demand?", and "Can resources not be switched to other programs?")

resulted in retention. Four "no" answers resulted in admissions curtailment of 47 degree programs. Other universities, including Michigan, are watching closely for pitfalls of what could become a streamlining model for hard pressed schools around the country. See — **Wade Roush**, "URI Tries Downsizing by Formula," *Science*, vol. 272 (April 19, 1996), p. 342-344.

IQ Controversy by **Pamela Rose** (SUNY at Buffalo)

Psychologist **Christopher Brand** (Edinburgh University) made some provocative comments to reporters on race differences in IQ, causing publisher Wiley to withdraw his book, *The G Factor*, on the eve of publication ("G" refers to "general intelligence," a factor derived from IQ tests). **Edinburgh University** has arranged an inquiry and Brand's supporters are calling

academics to boycott Wiley. Despite Brand's active efforts to fight this development, he has nevertheless pinned his hopes for publication on John Wiley & Sons. See — **Constance Holden**, "Wiley Drops IQ Book After Public Furor" in the News & Comment Section of *Science*, vol. 272 (May 3, 1996), p. 644.

Library Usage and Indirect Costs by **Pamela Rose** (SUNY at Buffalo)

"Circular A-21," the final U.S. indirect cost rate rule issued by the White House Office of Management and Budget, affirms the principle of recovering indirect costs but also imposes new bookkeeping requirements. After 1998, universities will no longer be able to charge for the cost of subsidizing tuition for fac-

ulty dependents and specially tailored fees for library usage, utility bills and student services. Everyone must follow the same accounting methods. See — **Jocelyn Kaiser**, "Final Indirect-Cost Rule Satisfies Few" in the ScienceScope Section of *Science*, vol. 272 (June 14, 1996), p. 1575.

The Price is Right by **Rosann Bazirjian** (FSU)

This article discusses the costs of hypertext links to retailers on the World Wide Web. In order for a business to sell its products, it will often seek out other related sites so that its product can be marketed to a wider audience. However, these links often come with a price tag. The cost could be ranging anywhere

from \$10 to \$1,500 per month. Prices for links are not regulated and the fact that they vary so widely is disturbing to some businesses. See — **R. Lee Sullivan**, "Toll Booths on the Information Highway," *Forbes*, 157 (6) (March 25, 1996), p. 118.

Not Rechargeable? by **Rosann Bazirjian** (FSU)

This is a brief article about laptop computer batteries! The author explores the issue of standardization of batteries, citing that some computer manufacturers are unwilling to make the switch to less expensive, rechargeable, standardized batteries. The author compares this to the camcorder business which used

customized batteries when they were first developed. By last count, however, the number of different battery types has fallen from 60 to 5. The author speculates about whether or not this will happen in the laptop business. See — **Suzanne Oliver**, "Batteries Not Included," *Forbes*, 157 (5) (March 11, 1996), p. 164.

Voyager's World by **Sandy Beehler** (Cornell University)

This is the inside story of Voyager, one of the first companies to "publish" books and movies digitally on laser discs and CD-ROM and, more recently, on the Web.

In spite of good ideas and a creative staff, the company continues to lose money. See — "The Teachings of Bob Stein," *Wired*, July, 1996, p. 126.

"Little House" Lives by **Twyla Racz** (Eastern Michigan University)

The "Little House" classics received little critical attention until recently. The author, a Director of Women's Studies, discusses this topic mainly centering around the importance of the frontier West in forming American character and the importance of the family. She suggests further issues that could be

studied. Meanwhile, the public pays no attention to any of the criticisms but continues to buy and read the books, and to visit the Ingalls and Wilder home sites. See — **Anita Clair Fellman**, "Everybody's Little Houses," *Publishing Research Quarterly*, vol. 12 (1) (Spring, 1996), p. 3-19.

The Copyright Wars by **Philip Dankert** (Cornell University)

How will the high stakes battle over the future of online access to scholarly material play out? The librarians vs. publishers battle may well help to determine the answers to several basic questions: (1) "which scholarly material will be available online?"; (2) who will be able to see the stuff" and (3) "what will they be able to do with it?" (download a file, store it, print it, etc.?) While legislation pending in Congress may well give strong new

copyright protection to the producers of electronic works, universities must insist on licenses that maintain a favorable environment for online use. See — "Checking the Fine Print on Superhighway Licenses: Colleges are Urged to Protect their Rights in Negotiations over Electronic Resources," by **Robert L. Jacobson**, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 5, 1996, pp. A15, A19-A20.