At Brunning: People and Technology: At the Only Edge that Means Anything/How We Understand What We Do

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Recommended Citation
Brunning, Dennis (2014) "At Brunning: People and Technology: At the Only Edge that Means Anything/How We Understand What We Do," Against the Grain: Vol. 26: Iss. 2, Article 54.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6739

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@Brunning: People & Technology

At the Only Edge that Means Anything / How We Understand What We Do

by Dennis Brunning (Director, The Design School Library, Arizona State University) <dennis.brunning@gmail.com>

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**Tubes**

My iPhone, on Wi-Fi, used to try to log me into any WIFI Router along my way. One router near campus bore the moniker THEN-TERNETISASERIESOF TUBES.

Ted Stevens, Alaska’s late senior senator, explained the Internet thus in a 2006 senate hearing on net neutrality. His major point was that as traffic increased, the networks would have to expand through improvements or contract through fees and taxes.

His words went viral in the online world whose libertarian and utopian goals and ideals were well settled. Besides, the Senator had built that bridge to nowhere, he excelled at pork; naturally nothing he said could be taken seriously.

Stevens, however, were he alive and kicking, might have the last laugh. By likening the Internet to a plumbing or electrical wiring, he was trying to shift to a more fitting metaphor to characterize the real nature of the Internet. Those who wanted the Internet to be free preferred to liken the Internet to a road, an information highway, built to move person and freight as freely as possible. Roads were a public utility or a public good.

Recent court rulings and business deals mark a notable turn in metaphor and real behavior. Recently the Supreme Court ruled that Internet providers like Verizon could make deals with content providers like Netflix to charge customers more for higher speed and data services. They ruled that customers could pay more for a wider highway, bigger pipes, more bulky tubes.

Hot on the heels of this decision, Netflix and Comcast agreed to do just that, a move both parties have confirmed they would make deals with content providers like Netflix to charge customers more for higher speed and data services. They ruled that customers could pay more for a wider highway, bigger pipes, more bulky tubes.

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**What’s up, Zuck?**

* Bugs Bunny would understand WhatsApp’s rocket rise in valuation...a bushel of carrots...

This is what Bugs Bunny would hear if he met Brian and Jan, two guys who created WhatsApp in their own version of a Silicon Valley garage in 2009. BTW, they are now the world’s most recent billionaires:

* WhatsApp Messenger is a cross-platform mobile messaging app which allows you to exchange messages without having to pay for SMS. WhatsApp Messenger is available for iPhone, BlackBerry, Windows Phone, Android, and Nokia.

Bugs would also learn, between chops on his bright orange carrot, that although Brian and Jan were slapped at Yahoo! for a decade running the advertising platform, they agreed in principle with another stated principle from the canonical Geekster movie, Fight Club:

> Advertising has us chasing cars and clothes, working jobs we hate so we can buy stuff we don’t need. — Tyler Durden, Fight Club

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**Read a Book (verb indicative)**

* The Library: A World History, text by James W.P. Campbell and photographs by Will Pryce is a stunning example of large format coffee book that rewards the reader with every ounce of effort of its makers. This includes the guys just mentioned but also the University of Chicago Press, the libraries featured, their librarians and staff, and all of us who support the library. Libraries get love over 300 pages of photographs, interior and exterior, of libraries from all over the world and its history. Included are elevations, detailed photographs, and sumptuous words that infuse the visuals with meaning.

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**Against the Grain / April 2014**

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