Blogs as Books, Books as Blogs

Michelle Leder, footnoted.org
Jeff Jarvis, buzzmachine.com
Amy Cohen, byamycohen.com
Scott Karp, publishing2.com
The merger back-story at BEAS...

A short time ago, BEA Systems (BEAS) filed its preliminary merger proxy which had lots of interesting details about the dance that finally led to Oracle's (ORCL) deal to buy BEA for $19.37 a share. Now, granted, I almost always find the whole "background of the merger" stuff to be pretty juicy reading, but the back and forth that led up to this deal is far more operatic — or at least telenovelic — than most.

From the beginning, where the proxy talks about Oracle offering a way out of the oh-so-cumbersome SEC filing requirements that BEA was late on due to stock options issues to the secret meetings with Carl Icahn in New York, it's a pretty interesting read. And then there's also the bit that while Oracle's initial $17 bid was on the table, BEA was shopping itself around to as many as 10 other companies. Here's a particularly interesting snippet:

On October 24, 2007, at the direction of the board, representatives of Goldman Sachs had discussions with Mr. Icahn and certain of his associates, in which Mr. Icahn recommended that the BEA board of directors exempt Oracle's $17.00 per share offer from BEA's stockholder rights
Financial Fine Print is designed to help individual investors do a better job at navigating increasingly complicated financial statements and SEC filings. While the book was written in the wake of accounting scandals at Enron and Worldcom, Financial Fine Print gives investors the tools they need to make better, more informed investment decisions today. The book was written after Michelle Leder, a veteran business journalist, lost a chunk of her IRA by investing in Qwest Communications. As part of the learning process, Leder did a post-mortem and realized that instead of relying on happy talk from corporate executives and over-enthusiastic analysts, she should have spent her time reading the company’s SEC filings. In a little over an hour’s time, she found several red flags that pointed to overly aggressive accounting.

By using numerous examples of actual footnotes that have appeared in SEC documents, the book teaches investors in easy-to-understand language ways to spot - and avoid — potential problems. The book contains dozens of Search Tips and Red Flags that investors can use to spot questionable disclosures, no matter what type of company they’re investing in.

Order online from Amazon.com
Whither withering newspapers?
February 7th, 2008

There’s nothing new at all in today’s New York Times story about the failing newspaper industry. It’s a basic roundup with a few more depressing quotes from the likes of Brian Tierney, who surely must regret his purchase of the Philadelphia Inquirer now.

What I wish were there was reporting on the next step: going to anyone and everyone asking them what they would do with a paper. If you bought the Sun-Times (who would?) or own the Boston Globe (speaking of regret) what radical steps would you take to rescue what matters?

I’ll throw in my two cents shortly. But I want to hear: what would you do if you owned a newspaper?

Tags: newspapers | 40 Comments »
Interview: Amy Cohen, author of "The Late Bloomer's Revolution"

I am just tickled to introduce to you my first author interview here on Books and Beliefs. Last week I read *The Late Bloomer's Revolution* and thoroughly enjoyed it. Today, I'm delighted to share my interview with the author, Amy Cohen:

Sheyna: Amy, welcome to the blog, and thank you so much for including Books and Beliefs in your blog tour. Let's get right to the interview.

You write about such painful, traumatic experiences, such as your mother's death and the broken engagement, yet you write with such levity and humor. How do you feel about sharing your pain in such a funny way?

Amy: First, I'm so happy you thought the book was funny. I love hearing that, so thank you. I come from a funny family. I think it's just the way we deal with things. It's never something we even think about, it just is.

Like today I did this radio interview by phone and of all days, workers were drilling and hammering in the apartment below me,
15 posts from November 2005

November 28, 2005

THE LONG TAIL OF TIME

Why are some things less popular than others? There are lots of reasons, of course, but the two I've been focusing on most in my research are the breadth of their appeal and their age. Things of broad appeal tend to sell better than things of narrow appeal. And new things tend to sell better than old things.

If you've been reading any of my work you'll know that I'm quick to emphasize that there's little connection between those two factors and the underlying quality of the product in question or the extent to which someone will be satisfied by it. Indeed, I argue that products aimed at narrow audiences, while not for everyone, tend to satisfy that minority that they're aimed at better than one-size-fits-all fare (think niche blogs or documentary films). And older products that still come up in recommendations are often those that have passed the test of time (classics).

When you look at a basic demand curve, the reasons why some things sell less well than others are lost in the merged rankings. Popularity is a multi-dimension thing: factors that determine an album's rankings, for instance, can include not just the quality of the music but also its genre, its release date, the fame and/or nationality of the band, similarity to other artists and so on. But it's all lost in the single dimension of a bestseller list, which obscures all that in a mashed-together melange of apples and oranges. (You can read my earlier rant about...
"Everybody is miscellaneous"
February 10th, 2008

Doc has a nice post about the fact that everybody is miscellaneous (to use his phrase), and why being lumped with others gives him aggregaphobia (another nice turn of phrase). [Tags: http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/doc/2008/02/10/aggregaphobia/]

Posted in politics, social effects, social networks | Leave a Comment » Share This

Cool visualizations
February 8th, 2008

Bestiario is a Spanish group that does some insanely watchable visualizations of networks of information. For example, poke around at their way of mapping del.icio.us links.

I’m not very good at interpreting visual data so I can’t tell if it’s helpful, but it sure is cool. [Tags: visualization social_networks]

Posted in cool tech, social networks | 2 Comments » Share This

Everything is Miscellaneous
About David Weinberger’s book (May, 2007) and how we’re pulling ourselves together now that we’ve blown ourselves to bits.

You can buy the book at your favorite online or real world book. Or go to isbn.nu for a choice of online stores.

NOTE: To navigate this site, click on the tabs at the top of the page...

See Michael Wesch’s fantastic video of some of the ideas in Everything Is Miscellaneous
The Future of Print Publishing and Paid Content

by Scott Karp

Print is dead and all content wants to be free — two bogeymen of the digital age, with some edge of truth, but based on current visibility, still unlikely at those extremes. But it’s undeniable that the economics of print publishing are very different today than what they were before the web, and more content is available for free on the web than any media company could ever have imagined.

Most of the discussion about the future of print publishing and paid content centers on the content, which makes sense, but the content hasn’t really changed that much (despite the emergence of some new forms) — nor do I think the value of content has changed in the minds of content consumers, e.g. people who value journalism still value it — their numbers haven’t diminished as so many fear.
Money For Nothing, Books For Free

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Below you can find downloadable versions of all six stories in this collection. I've set them up as plain text, HTML, and printable PDFs formatted for A4 and letter-sized paper. If you've got a favorite format you'd prefer to see them in, go ahead and convert 'em, then email them to me along with the name and URL of the reader used with your format.

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Like Tim O'Reilly says, "Obscenity is a far greater threat to authors and creative artists than piracy.

Or, more to the point, as Woody Guthrie said:

This song is Copyrighted in U.S., under Seal of Copyright #154085, for a period of 28 years, and anybody caught singin' it without our permission, will be mighty good friends of ours, cause we don't give a damn. Publish it, Write it. Sing it, Swing to it. Yodel it. We wrote it, that's all we wanted to do.

Printcode

Official files: PDF (A4) | PDF (Letter) | HTML | Plain text

Podcast: Part 1

Others: Microsoft Reader (info) (Tari Akpodoite) | MobileJacket (info) (Tari Akpodoite) | Sony iReader/Reader (Mark Pizzillo) | Freerder (info) (Dan Reyes) | Palm DOC (info) (Jeremy Brooks) | iPod Notes (Jason Hart) | Plucker PDB (info) (Jeremy Brooks)