WHAT THE #$%/?!

IS GOING ON?

Geoff McDonald
25 BIG ideas to help you know what’s going on so you can profit from opportunities and make informed decisions about your future direction.
Acknowledgements

Thanks to all the *Book Rapper* subscribers!
Without you this book would not have been written.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When Were You Born For?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Your Context</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Rapper</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Books</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Profit from this Book</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Work Has Changed</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How the Internet is Disrupting Your Business</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pendulum Swings</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One is Good, Many is Better...</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Live Forever</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Blogs Are Like Movies</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Soap Story</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Real War on Talent</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Great Business Gestalt</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Future of Your Brain</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Future of the Newspaper</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Tweet Home</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Save the World</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The End of the Beginning</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverse Evolution</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where Are We Now?</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Virtual Presenter</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Future Sake!</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Personal Opportunity of a Lifetime</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Future of Work and Organisations</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Rules!</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media’s Killer Application</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Next Ideal Tree</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Wicked Future</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Lead with Social Media</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexy Success</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Books</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Author</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Between the years 1831 and 1840 something remarkable happened. The period was not one of devastating war, political revolution, climate crisis, social unrest or spectacular invention of new technologies.

Yet, this short nine year period could be called the best time ever to be born.

As Malcolm Gladwell tells the tale in his book, *Outliers*, during this nine year period, 14 of the 75 richest people in history were all born in America. That’s almost 20% of the world’s richest people in history all being born in a single country in less than a decade. Extraordinary!

What happened? Was it a tidal wave of god-given talent? Were these individuals gifted the business gene? Or were they just plain lucky?

It seems that luck did play a part in their success in one crucial way. They may have literally been born
in the right time and place to take advantage of America’s Industrial Revolution.

During the 1860’s and 1870’s the US economic transformation spawned a host of new industries. This included: Oil, Steel, Railroads, Banks, Electricity, Tobacco and Refrigeration. This is how these gentlemen made their money.

It seems that if you were born in the 1840’s you missed the opportunity. Too late. And, if you were born in the 1820’s you were too old – with your thinking likely to be tainted by Pre-Civil war paradigms. You were born too early.

Gladwell also identifies a similar pattern for the founders of modern computing giants Microsoft, Apple and Sun Microsystems. Their founders were all born in a 3-year period between 1953-56.

And, we’re seeing a similar pattern emerging from the young guns of today...

- Pierre Omidyar - Ebay, 1967
- Reid Hoffman - Linked In, 1967
- Larry Page - Google, 1973
- Sergey Brin - Google, 1973
- Jack Dorsey - Twitter, 1976
- Mark Zuckerberg - Facebook, 1984

Sometimes making it to the top requires a little luck. It helps to be born at the right time. It helps significantly if you work hard. And, none of this matters if you’re not open to the opportunities that surround you. In other words, if you’re blinded to the context in which you live and work. And, that’s what this book is about.
The Best Time To Be Born

Pioneers of Industrial Technology
- Too Soon! 1820
- Just Right! 1830
- Too Late! 1840

Pioneers of Computer Technology
- Too Soon! 1945
- Just Right! 1955
- Too Late! 1965

Pioneers of Internet Technology
- Too Soon! 1960
- Just Right! 1970
- Too Late! 1980
Warren Bennis picks up this theme in his classic leadership text, *On Becoming a Leader*. His opening chapter is titled ‘Mastering the Context’. His view is that we are all born into a set of circumstances. Some more desirable than others. Either way, it is our response to this context that matters. We can either surrender to it or master it. This is the switch for turning on leadership. The willingness to fulfil your purpose - both individually and as an organisation - regardless of the starting point.

In our rapidly changing world, a leader is like a sailor with a compass. We need to be able to learn from the world around us, the ebbs and flows of the tide, the positions of the underlying currents and the directions of the prevailing winds. Without this knowledge of our environment we are doomed to be at it’s effect, instead of its master.

This set of articles is about the context we’re living in today. They’re about the big ideas shaping our individual and our organisational futures. They’re
about the big opportunities that we can ride like a surfer to golden riches lying on the beach.

This book is provocatively called *What the #$%?! Is Going On* because this is the battle cry of our generation. It’s both a proclamation of anxiety that we don’t know what’s going on. And, it’s a statement of opportunity of the turbulent times in which we live.

It’s been written as fuel for those in business who want to lead the way, for those who want to explore new opportunities and for those who want to make informed business decisions.

It’s also for those people who want a first level of defence against disruption from direct competitors, previously anonymous global players and seemingly unrelated technologies.

The future leaves clues today and your challenge is to tackle these ideas as sparks to creating your future. Grab these trends, patterns and ideas today to create the future you want tomorrow.

You can’t master your context until you define what it is.
Opportunity

It’s only an opportunity if...

- You can spot it (Context)
- You can build it (Capability) and
- You’re willing to do something about it (Leadership).
What opportunity were you born to fulfil?
What capabilities do you need to fulfil this opportunity?
What are you going to do about it?
Book Rapper

The articles in this book were previously published in separate Book Rapper issues. This is the first time they’ve have been published as a single collection.

Book Rapper rewrites important business books in a visual way to make it easy for you to digest the key ideas inside thirty minutes. It’s an easy way to learn from some of the best business brains on the planet.

Most Book Rapper issues include a ‘Context’ article that places the book within the bigger context. These are those ‘Context’ articles. They were written and published with from 2007 to 2013.

For instance, The Four Hour Work Week points to the changing nature of work. Crowdsourcing is a guide to the explosive value of Social Media. And, The Starfish and the Spider shows the disruptive power of the Internet on traditional business models.

We’ve added a few extra bits to help you deepen your understanding of today’s context and how to profit from these opportunities.

If you want to know more visit us at: BookRapper.com
The Books

Note: You may have noticed there are 27 books shown here and only 25 articles - there were two double issues where two books were used. This publication includes the Context article only and not the full book summaries.
How to Profit from this Book

Most books are written so you’ll start at one end and tip-toe your way to the end. And, this is not most books.

**Start anywhere.**

**Stop and reflect anytime.**

**Discuss it with others.**

If it’s just you... Each chapter is a big idea and takes between 5-10 minutes to digest. You might want to challenge yourself to one big idea every day for 25 days. That’s a month of head-spinning innovation fuel.

Alternatively, if you’re a leader of a team, you might like to share one idea with your team to discuss once a week. That’s almost six months of exploration, conversation and insight.

To read this book in about ten minutes, simply flick through and either explore the diagrams or the highlighted text. These will give you the broad strokes of what’s going on.

Then you can dive a little deeper into the BIG ideas that interest you the most.
The BIG Ideas
How Work Has Changed

The Book
Timothy Ferris

*The 4-Hour Work Week: Escape the 9-5, Live Anywhere and Join the New Rich*


The Book Rapper Issue
The Four Hour JOLT!
Business/Self development books bring to mind sheep in wolfs clothing; they’re a better fit with ‘auto-biography’ than the ‘fix it’ genre.

What they represent is life experience pulled together, bowerbird style, into a personal ethic, philosophy, research paper, manual, etc.

The unifying theme is: ‘buy my book/ebook; CD/DVD; workshop/seminar, and, I’ll show you how you too can get:

- Rich/religion
- Motivated/thin
- Up early/up yourself
- Calm/connected
- Jailed/free
- Colour coded/colour integrated
- Multiple orgasms/organised
- The perfect job/the bosses job
- Wired/unwired
- A 3rd mortgage/a 3rd bankruptcy
- A dodgy song into Eurovision/a colonic irrigation
- A cubicle on the window side (when Roger retires)/a $50 million hand-shake (only a few of these)…

Get it?

They are published, for better or for worse, because the author wants us to feel as good as he does when we replicate his life, buy (sic) following his process/rituals/acronyms/advice.

At first reading, The 4-Hour Work Week neatly fits this genre: work less/play more; increase income/decrease hours; more freedom/less accountability.
Yeah, yeah... Move on, you’ve read it all before; you know the drill! But wait! This time it may be different.

Sure, Tim Ferriss walks his talk (lots do), tells it like it is (very Gen Y), has zero tolerance for ‘idiots’ (envy it), and yet, on second (and third) reading, there is more, much more here. It’s rests in what Tim Ferriss doesn’t say. It’s what he, and a few others of his generation, (unwittingly) demonstrate in who/how they connect, commit, commune and communicate with their species; in the way they engage life.

What Book Rapper is flagging is perhaps something that you don’t yet know you will want to know.

The global perception and practice of work has undergone a seismic shift.

We’re in the beginning of an ‘Industrial’ Revolution (we’ve had several of them; a major one was the 40 hour work week) and the 4-Hour Workweek concept makes the Short Time Movement look like an all day sucker!

The Short Time ‘8 Hour Day’ movement grew out of the atrocious conditions of England’s Industrial Revolution’s factories. With working days of 12-16 hours commonplace Robert Owen launched a plan for an 8 hour day way back in 1817. His innovative vision was for a 24-hour-day plan comprising 8 hours of work, 8 hours of play and 8 hours rest.

Whilst skilled workers in Australia and New Zealand were awarded a union negotiated 8 hour day as early as the 1850’s it didn’t become a typical day for all workers until around 1920.

One hundred and fifty years later, the end of the 9-5, M-F 40 hours work/live for the weekend lifestyle is rolling into a workplace near you.
The History of Work Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Hours Worked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Unlimited**
Industrial workers in 18th Century England worked 12-16 hours a day.

**8 Hour Day**
A Revolution in 1817, the 40 hour work took almost 100 years to become normal.

**Workaholic**
In recent years, the career hungry have boosted their work hours again.

**4 Hour Week**
Ferriss accelerates productivity and slashes work time.

*Classic pattern*... Note the final flourish of working even harder in the old way to get more done. Until, it finally breaks and a completely new way of working explodes the previous limits.
Like Owen, TIM Ferris has posted a radical vision – a 4-Hour Work Week – and it’s close to the mark of the promised ideal offered at the beginning of the Information/Knowledge Age.

Remember the Age of Leisure (freedom) with which visionaries of the recent past have tantalised and motivated us? Well, Ferriss shows us that he has achieved it; he’s pulled the plug on an 80 hour, office bound week and freed himself to live his ideal lifestyle.

His DEAL offers each game soul the key to enable them to pursue a personal dream or passion. You can create a one-off blueprint, a personalised Lifestyle Design and live your ideal life.

The DEAL process is also the perfect lens through which to view changes in industrial, social and cultural evolution over the last 200 years.

In terms of Time, if you’re still working 50-70 (or more) hours a week, then you’re doing no better than steam driven England. It may be that your soul (sic) purpose in life is to serve as a warning to others!

When Absolute Income (hours in/dollars out) is the measure, we’re all better off. However, the outstanding winners today are those who plan around, and insist on, Relative Income ($$’s per hour worked).

Finally, if you’re commuting to a cubicle five or six days a week then you’ve only traded tools and method in the Mobility stakes since 1850...
You’ve effectively swapped your loom for a computer, and your horse for an engine.

Tim Ferriss insists that you define what ‘work’ is for you. Why are you doing what you’re doing? He claims that it can only be one of two things: ‘income generation’ or ‘dream fulfilment’. ‘Work’ is a scientific term; it’s a measure of energy used. It has nothing to do with generating an income or fulfilling a dream.

Will you choose to generate an income or pursue your passion and live your dream?

What might happen if you re-frame the word ‘work’ to ‘income’ or ‘dream’?

Be mindful that even when you don’t choose, you do! Life is the original DIY: Lifestyle Design is your own personal ‘how to’ map.

Why should you change?

Family: What did you miss out on growing up? Are you leaving the same legacy for your family or pumping for something different?

Career: Is the cost of what you’re pursuing worth it? Are you in a game worth playing; a game worth winning? Are you going through the motions or training yourself for a better tomorrow?

Self-Image: Are you holding onto habitual beliefs to keep you from pursuing opportunities to show what you secretly believe you’re really made of?

Listen, really listen, to your internal voice, your instincts, your intuition. You can’t store time in a bottle. Drink deeply today, down to the last sip. Don’t waste a drop.
The 4-Hour Work Week is a JOLT for you to make a paradigm shift in how you relate to yourself and to your world.

It’s about being you first, in designing yourself as a person, who you are and only then about what you do to earn the income you need to practice, act as, behave, experience being who you are.

It’s an inspiring book when read as that - an account of how one person lives an inspirational life. Tim clearly set out his process and it is a repeatable one.

Otherwise, you know all the stuff in it. It’s the little brother of 1984 and the 80/20 rule. Great principles that we all need reminding of now and then – eliminate crap: work on what brings in 80% of your income.

You know all that. And frustratingly, you don’t follow it. Why? Could it be that you’re not being your true self. Are you acting out of what you have to do – what is expected - and not what you want to do.

Are you being YOU?
What is ‘work’ for you?
Do you work for money or purpose?
Are you working more or less than 10 years ago?
How are you using digital/web tools to work remotely?
Is your retirement plan not to?
How the Internet is Disrupting Your Business

The Book
Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom

The Starfish and the Spider; The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations

The Book Rapper Issue
Leaderful: The Power of Decentralized Organizations
There was an amazing story several decades ago prior to Perestroika in the USSR when a German flying student flew a small plane from Germany and landed in Red Square in Moscow.

For years, during the Cold War, the Americans and the Russians had been engaged in an escalating battle of espionage and defence. It was thought impossible that a plane could get anywhere near Russia, let alone the beating heart of Moscow, without the Russians knowing about it well in advance.

Well, it happened. By effectively flying below the radar, the German flying student popped up in Red Square like Marilyn Monroe out of an invisible birthday cake and shouted ‘Surprise!’

The central idea in The Starfish and the Spider will have a similar impact on business over the next decade.

Even though there are well-known examples of successful decentralized organisations around us right now, this idea in the popular press is not only invisible, it is almost blasphemous!

While the business press celebrates our prized leaders as the source of strength, certainty and foresight our business schools champion ‘leadership’ as the great salvation for our confused and ever changing world.

Yet, the ticking clock in the background suggests the pendulum that swings between centralization and decentralization is making a decisive strike in the opposite direction.

Has no one noticed that the central (sic!) feature that is transforming business today is a decentralized structure called the Internet?
In parallel with our opening story, it too is a result of Cold War defence. Developed by the US Military to create a ‘leaderless’ organization in case the Soviets attacked, the Internet has become the most pervasive challenge to business today.

As Seth Godin suggests in his latest serving, *Meatball Sundae*, the Internet has ended advertising, changed marketing forever and upturned your business - or haven’t you noticed?

Decentralized organizations pose a similar threat. The game has changed, as any music industry executive will tell you.

Napster started in a college dorm room and started dismantling the music empires of the big five recording companies one swapped song at a time. The starfish had attacked the spider and won.

Historically, the Industrial Revolution gave birth to business based upon top-down control in the form of a hierarchy - think military command. In contrast, the Internet shapes the Information or Knowledge Era in which we live and with the digitalization of information this favours a decentralized approach based upon loose networks, open systems and interacting relationships.

Is it any wonder the Big Military of the US didn’t see the cells of Al Qaeda coming?

**The pendulum is swinging.**

**Whilst it won’t swing completely to purely decentralized structures, competitive advantage in the digital economy is heading that way.**

We are likely to have many more fusions like Ebay, Skype and Wikipedia. And, other landscapes will not escape the starfish imprint either.

On the political platform, Barack Obama may become the first black president of the US.
The Pendulum Swings

Centralized
- Spiders
- Dictators
- Military
- Government
- Television
- Typical Corporation
- General Motors
- Microsoft

Decentralized
- Starfish
- Our Brain
- The Internet
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Apache Indians
- Terrorist Cells
- Open Source software
- Peer to Peer software

Fusion
- Big Brother
- Wikipedia
- Craigslist
- Toyota
- Skype
- Ebay
- GE
However, this will be a mere sideshow to the real change - the first president elected using a fusion of decentralized campaigning.

Whilst Hillary’s campaign was up to $36 million in debt based upon a classic top-down approach of seeking big donations from major players, Obama broke funding records. Through hundreds of thousands of contributors offering under $200 each he had more contributors than any previous candidate and simultaneously gained a million friends on social networking sites.

Whilst elections are not won by dollars in the bank they are won by grassroots action one vote at a time.

Most interestingly, if decentralization gets Obama to the White House, could this be the beginning of the redesign of democracy?

With the aid of the Internet, participatory democracy is highly achievable against the centuries old tradition of elected representatives going off to our Capital Cities to vote on our behalf.

In Australia, as the most governed country in the world, perhaps it is time to dismantle the Federalism of states and become the ‘Starfish Republic’.

**Decentralizing the monolith of government would surely be a transformation of society.**

Something closer to the lounge room is the demise of television, that bastion of centralized conformity and family life that is being transformed by the freewheeling anarchy of the Internet. Being told what to watch and when to watch it is not a popular sport for Gen Xers and Ys.

TV is also changing at other levels: the canned laughter of the sit-com is giving way to Reality TV where the ‘actors’ are free to be themselves rather than following some pre-ordained script.
The Big Brother parallel to business is evident in the increasing demand for innovation. If you want to be creative you need to abandon corporate speak and start to think and act for yourself.

In a command and controlled environment innovation is a contradiction. To remain competitive in the cut-throat global arena of big business, decentralized units will be ‘the Idea Advantage’ because they are naturally suited to the free-flowing nature of an open system.

Ironically, the presentation of decentralization as the way to leader-less organizations is only partly accurate.

Instead of a starfish organization being mired by the imagery of a chook with its head cut off running around aimlessly, our organizations will become more leader-ful!

If Peter Drucker were alive today he would proclaim the ‘Leaderful Organization’ as the replacement of business bossiness.

Rather than having one dominant leader or chain of leaders, our organizations will require that we all step up to the plate and demonstrate personal leadership in being accountable and responsible for our contribution each and every day.

A catalyst and an even stronger ideology that is truly worth believing in will replace the reliance on the CEO to lead the way. Building corporate cultures is like innovation; in a closed system of centralized control it is a contrivance and a contradiction.
Instead, decentralize, loosen the reins and let your employees step up to the plate in smaller circles where there is no place to hide.

In our previous RAP ‘The Four Hour JOLT!’ we pointed to the demise of the 40-hour work week – a major societal shift but a mere whimper compared to the deafening roar of decentralization.

This is a major change in the organizational design of the structure of our society… business, government, communities. It also changes our role within these fundamental human associations.

Ignore this at your peril!

PS: Co-author of The Starfish and the Spider, Rod A Beckstrom was been appointed as a top-level advisor to the US Department of Homeland Security in an effort to strengthen cyber-security. The Bush administration realized that a centralized approach was not working to stem the impact of starfish based hackers.
Postscript

This article was written in the lead up to the 2008 US Presidential Election.

You probably know that Obama won the election and became US President not once but twice since then.

We’ve also learned...

• Social media can make you a world leader.

• Centralized government - at least in the US - is as entrenched as ever. There are few signs of change. It might just be asking too much for any politician to bypass their own self-interest and vote for the common good.

• Decentralized forces have also been at work in other political places. Uprisings in the Middle East have risen on the tide of social media to expose tyranny and voice freedom.
Are you building a centralized or decentralized organisation?

Is your leadership based on centralized control?

How can you use the Internet to decentralize aspects of your business?

What is your ideology?
One is Good, Many is Better...

The Book
Barry Libert and Jon Spector and thousands of Contributors

*We Are Smarter Than Me: How to Unleash the Power of Crowds in Your Business*


The Book Rapper Issue
The Bees Wees
To learn about the power of community-at-work look to the natural world.

An individual bee, with its modest brain, is incapable of producing a hive by itself. And yet, a colony of bees can build a hive-community in the most amazing way. The mighty midget termite-mound builders of Northern Australia, show what is possible when the ants work toward a mutual goal.

Wow! When it comes to working together for the common good, Book Rapper defers to the master - Nature herself.

Community Building releases control, unfurls ideas, shares information, connects like-minded individuals and promotes cooperation within vast communities. By giving away our raw imagination and naked ideas we allow others to polish up these diamonds-in-the-rough. Just put ‘em out there!

How often have you secretly hung onto your best ideas only to see them flower in someone else’s garden! Ongoing interaction and dialogue is what makes information useful; feedback from others refines it for even greater benefit.

The business models of crowd-sourcing and community building extend the Aussie community spirit - CWA, CFA, SES - and traditional American barn-raising; they raise the roof on business possibilities. Housed under the vibrant white roofs of a Greek island village beats the slow, steady, throbbing heart of community cooperation. It’s the same heart that the smart organization now has throbbing through its workplace chambers.

Gone are the days of the few controlling the many where corporations decided what, when and how things were produced. Henry Ford’s ‘any colour as long as its black’ (because black paint was the cheapest) was the poster child of corporate control in those days of old.
In less than 20 years, the World Wide Web has spawned new business models and reversed the concentration of economic power.

Wikinomics, crowd-sourcing and open-source has democratized production and created an ‘economy of the people, by the people and for the people’. The ‘new community’ taps into the power of the masses to fulfil tasks previously safely guarded by the exclusive eyes of in-house experts within the walls of the corporate office and the factory.

The Web has enabled this change in collaboration. Initially, the ‘1-way Web’ mirrored Industrial Age thinking whereby business focussed on control of information. The modus operandi was to generate profit through strategies to corner the data market and up the price. Web 2.0, the ‘2-way Web’ has flipped this on its pink ear.
Web 2.0 recognizes that information becomes more valuable as more people use it.

**Social networking, crowdsourcing and building communities is your future. Think and work together.**

When we communitize we can reduce costs, wind up with a better road-tested product; a product that is already supported by a waiting market of customers.

*We Are Smarter Than Me* also shows how the principles of crowd sourcing can be used in the recruitment and retention of good people. This has to be a welcome bonus.

So, what can social networking, building a community and crowdsourcing do for you, your product and your brand?

Wrong question! Rewind; reframe. Instead, ask:

**What can I do for my customer, my people and my product?** The answer: Build communities!

Social Networking sites like Facebook, MySpace and Second Life are second nature to Gen Y. Finally, smart heads of corporations and businesses are catching on. The future of business points to Community Building, Social Networking and Crowd Sourcing.

One is good; many is better; We is best!
How can you use social networking to build a community?
How can you include your customers in your innovation and decision making?
How can you promote collaboration within your organisation?
How to Live Forever

The Book
Chip and Dan Heath

*Made To Stick: Why Some Ideas Take Hold and Others Come Unstuck*

The Book Rapper Issue
The Sticking Point: How to Give Every Idea a Potent Twist
Ridley Scott’s *Gladiator* (2000) depicts the journey of Roman General Maximus Decimus Meridius (played by Russell Crowe) from charismatic wartime army hero, to emotionally bankrupt (Spanish!) slave, to all-conquering Gladiator. Maximus, with charisma and courage restored, takes on and annihilates his nemesis Emperor Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix).

The movie is memorable for several reasons, not the least of which is Russ’s riveting Oscar winning performance. There is also the opening finger-peeping, visceral battle scene in distant Germania, and the scintillating set design of 180 AD Rome.

In one air-sucking scene, barbarian gladiators arrive at the foot of the Coliseum standing agog at the sheer scale of it.

This puts the magnificence of Rome into a useful historical context because it highlights a profound fictional conversation in the movie.

It’s a very short conversation about ten minutes into the film; it’s a conversation that probably went ‘unheard’ by most of the audience.

Marcus Aurelius, the Emperor of Rome (Richard Harris) is talking to Maximus (our Russ). He expresses his concerns over the future of Rome. He starts with the question ‘What is Rome?’ and then says…

“There was once a dream that was Rome. You could only whisper it. Anything more than a whisper and it would vanish, it was so fragile and I fear that it will not survive the winter.”

Two millennium ago, Rome was more than a vibrant city, it was an empire that stretched around
the Mediterranean Sea. This was at the heart of Marcus Aurelius’ concern.

Today, the remnants of this Idea are still with us, the physical element is a city paved with history and inhabited by a couple of million people. Yet the cultural legacy lives on in more subtle and more invisible ways.

From today’s standpoint, to imagine Rome as a mere Idea, and one so fragile that it could vanish, is as astonishing as the Coliseum was to the Gladiators.

Rome was – in around 180AD - an Idea! Just an Idea in the mind and heart of the passionate Emperor of this strife-torn, unstable settlement.

Now, here’s the Point. Doesn’t everything start out as a fragile idea, a mere fleeting thought?

An idea is at the core of everything – yes, everything - that was ever created. Every man-made concept, conversation or thing started as a fleeting thought in someone’s head.

Yet, the power of Rome, as an idea that has flourished for 2000 years, shows that ideas can be immortal. And this, is where Make It Stick finds its place.

It shows how to take your passing fancy and turn it into your ‘Rome’ – an idea that grows into physical form and can live through the ages – or at least until you’re onto your next project.

How do you take your fleeting fancy and translate it into an Idea that’s long lived, or at least, makes a difference to your here and now?

Sticky Ideas are fundamental to everything we all do.
Ideas Marketing
How to build ideas that live forever
Business itself is a powerful Idea; an Idea that at some Point in pre-history started as a fanciful thought in someone’s head. Every minor and major business started in the same way. Someone had a thought and they framed it in a way that stuck.

The raw power of an Idea is it’s potential for immortality. Can you imagine having an idea that lived forever?

Here’s how...

First you need a thought – a little gem that you think up or, nick from someone else.

Next, you add flesh to your skeletal thought. Until Make It Stick – this may have been hit and miss / pot luck / touch and go. You perform microsurgery on that embryonic Idea to test its core purity – it’s simplicity.

When, and only when, it passes the Heath Brothers’ SUCCESs test, you Innovate (apply it) and give your Idea a life of it’s own in the hearts and minds of others.

We’re all in the business of selling. Yet, have you ever wondered precisely what it is that you’re selling?

The correct answer is that you’re selling an Idea. We’re all in the business of Ideas because, ultimately, the idea is what is sold. We don’t buy physical things or strategies or concepts; we buy an Idea. We buy the idea of what that thing can do for us.

Make It Stick could be renamed “How to Sell Ideas”. (But that’s not as sticky is it?) Ultimately, that’s what’s up for sale - an Idea - no matter what the product. We attempt to enrol others into an Idea so that we can move it from its fragile, embryonic
state to a more substantial form; a product from which we can profit.

When we set out to sell an Idea, the first sale we need to make is to ourselves.

So, how do you decide if your idea is worth buying? How do you decide if it will work?

New ideas have no precedent. Therefore, you need to trust your gut, because you’re the ultimate consumer; and/or you TWIST your idea because The ‘Will It Stick’ Test works!

Shared Ideas are the building blocks of Life; sound Ideas are the corner stones of our Economy; Sticky Ideas are the mortar of your economic SUCCESs.

What’s your Rome?
What’s Your Rome?
What’s your BIG idea?
How can I live your BIG idea anywhere anytime?
Why Blogs Are Like Movies

The Book
Michael A Banks
Blogging Heroes: Interviews with 30 of the World’s Top Bloggers

The Book Rapper Issue
We Blog
Have you ever wondered where the word ‘movie’ comes from? Usually, when something new is invented, it takes the name of some thing that exists, something that is already familiar to us.

For example, the Internet was once called an ‘information superhighway’. The ‘car’ was the ‘motor car’ which came from ‘motor carriage’. Before that, the ‘motor carriage’ was called a ‘horseless carriage’. And, before that we had the ‘horse and carriage’.

**This extension of existing terminology is an effective strategy because this is how our brains work. We literally connect new information to existing neurons.**

The term ‘movie’ is short hand for ‘moving pictures’ which gives us a clue to where this technology originated.

The invention of the camera gave birth to ‘still images’. In contrast, when a series of images is strung together in rapid succession we get the illusion of ‘pictures moving’.

As a kid, you may have created your own animation this way. Perhaps you drew a series of stick figure on cards and then flicked them in sequence to make your figure appear to move.

So what do a ‘blog’ and a ‘movie’ have in common?

For starters, the way these two words got their name. Each one is a shortened version of some other thing. ‘Movie’ is short for ‘moving pictures’. And, the word ‘blog’ is short for ‘web log’. What’s a web log? It’s a list of entries similar to a diary, posted regularly on the Internet.

**Next up, and more usefully, movies and blogs are the direct result of acceleration.**
This is a really important distinction because it puts blogs into context. It tells us what they are in relation to websites. It also points to how we can get the best from them, and even a possible future of the Internet.

The unofficial patron saint of Wired Magazine, 1960’s media guru Marshall McLuhan, flagged that when things speed up, the effect of the media changes. This means that the way the media operates and performs alters, and this significantly changes its impact on us in our day to day lives.

His insight is ably demonstrated by the shift from still (photography) to moving images (film). They are two different media with two different sets of results.

Historically, photographs have encouraged posing and have promoted the artificial smile, whilst movies have warped our sense of time, and allowed our fantasies to come to life.
Today, photography and film live as overlapping, yet distinct industries. And now, here’s the clincher. Websites and blogs appear to be headed for a similar future: overlapping yet distinct.

Less than ten years ago, you needed technical skill to create, or update even the simplest website. It was also expensive because you had to pay a web designer by the hour to create or update your site. The cost and the time involved prohibited people from posting updates more than once or twice a month.

Now, after a decade of Internet development we have seen lightning changes. The ease and accessibility of blogging allows anyone with minimal skills to add content to the World Wide Web quickly and with minimal effort. Just ask any school kid!

Technically speaking, blogs are a content management system. The key to its simplicity is that it has a number of automated features making it dead easy to update a website. This automation enables a DIY approach to blogging.

And so it follows, that because anyone and everyone can do it, DIY blogging accelerates the frequency that anyone can add a post.

And this is the reason why more than 75 million blogs have appeared in the last ten years.

Whilst quicker and easier may seem like a modest change, when the acceleration happens at the right speed, the net (sic!) effect changes the game completely.

For example, movies are displayed at 24 frames per second. This speed is quick enough for the brain to process the individual frames as a single, flowing, moving picture. Any slower and the effect doesn’t work. All you see is the individual frames.
And so it is with the speed of blogging.

When we speed up the overall output of the world wide web, and invite instant input from anyone-anywhere-anytime, we change the communication from a one-way channel to a shared to-and-fro conversation.

This is the fundamental shift from the one-way web to our dynamic, interactive, social Web 2.0.

Acceleration of interaction means that information appears to flow, somewhat like a face-to-face conversation. In the same way that moving pictures appear to be real, online conversations now appear to flow quickly, easily and effortlessly.

This illusory perception changes the nature of the Internet.

Just as a movie is an illusion created by still images going faster, a snapshot of the future of the web can be captured in one word: ‘faster’. And ‘faster’ fosters interaction.
Faster means quicker access-speed and it also means that we’ll access information more often. For example, handheld Internet devices like the iPhone and the Blackberry enable us to be constantly connected.

This speed-up of the web already has an offspring; it’s given birth to microblogging.

What’s microblogging? It’s a facility on a website, that enables short, one or two sentence comments to be posted quickly and often; by the minute, hourly, or daily. Think Twitter and Facebook.

Microblogging can be whatever, and whenever, you and your friends/community want it to be.

From a community building point of view, microblogs are beginning to overtake blogs. It’s confirmation that we now live in a short, sharp, instant, impulsive world.

Get ready for a faster future.

Blogs will still continue to be important, of course. Think of them as journalism for everyone - longer articles, more detail and more opinion.

To compare blogs and microblogs to traditional web pages, or their forebears the magazine article, is inaccurate. Better, to compare blogs/microblogs to the phenomenon of teenagers (and increasingly their parents) texting each other throughout the day.

Are you getting the picture here? Can you ‘C’ the fourfold future: Constantly, Connected, Conversational Communities.

And here’s an interesting spin-off from blogging/microblogging; the way we listen has changed.

No one wants to listen to a biased, subjective, one-way, sales pitch (rant!) any longer. We’d all far
prefer to join in a conversation and, be part of a community in which we can actively participate. It’s more inclusive, and that’s important.

This dramatic shift in the way we communicate was flagged by Seth Godin in *Meatball Sundae* (see *Book Rapper* Issue: Marketing Now-How).

We fragile human beings thrive on connection and inclusion. And now, thanks to our exhilarating digital media, these basic human needs are easier to meet across all social and cultural groups.

**Anyone and everyone can join in. This is one small step for the web; one giant leap for mankind.**

The future is looking bright!

Just in case you’re starting to panic, rest assured that, like still photographs, static websites will continue to play a major role in building your brand and selling your product.

However, to fail to include a fast-response mechanism, like a blog, on all your websites would be to misunderstand the Web 2.0 medium, and how to ride its evolutionary wave.

In this *Book Rapper* issue we dive into the intoxicating phenomena that is the blog medium, and tease out how you and your business can profit from it. Oh, and remember to have fun!
Have you started blogging yet?
What conversation do you want to lead?
Is your website a static brochure or a place of interaction and community?
A Soap Story

The Book
Douglas Atkin

The Culting of Brands: Turn Your Customers Into True Believers

The Book Rapper Issue
Brand Worship: Turn Your Customers Into a Cult Following
Once upon a time in a small village, a local soap maker produced his wares and sold them out of his own front door.

For the other locals in the town this was a godsend. After their weekly bath you could hear them sing, ‘Clean at last! Clean at last!’

As the village became a town, another soap maker arrived. At first the two artisans were a little wary of each other. There hadn’t been another soap maker in town before.

They soon realized, the town was big enough for the both of them and they happily shared the town’s customers.

A short time later, the General Store received a visit from a travelling salesman. He represented a big soap making company from an emerging city over 100 miles away.

The quality of his generic soap wasn’t quite as good as the handmade ones the locals had been used to, but it was a little cheaper and it was yellow.

At first the locals avoided it, simply because it was different and they didn’t trust ‘different’.

Eventually ‘cheaper’ won over some locals and the new product established a regular clientele – much to the disgust of those who stayed with the hand-made local product.

Some time later, another travelling salesman from a different soap company appeared.

It didn’t take long for a rivalry to emerge between the new soap giants. The Great Northern Soap Company versus the Great Southern Soap Company.

There was a discount war, free samples and special offers. They even started advertising to attract attention, with both companies yelling ‘OUR SOAP IS BETTER!’
The customers loved this. They not only had more choice, they had people craving for their attention too. But the local soap makers hated it; eventually both of them went out of business.

Not long after, a third soap appeared but it wasn’t from a third company. The Great Southern Soap Company had produced a new soap.

It looked like the other soaps but came in a bright white box with a beautiful girl on the front. The package was so stunning you could imagine someone making art out of it one day.

And, best of all, it wasn’t just soap, it was called ‘Luxury’. And, it wasn’t for getting rid of dirt either. It was to ‘make yourself beautiful.’ Or at least, that’s what the pack said.

Yes, it was a bit more expensive but hey, if it’ll make me beautiful… Damn, those extra cents, I’m worth it!
Then some time later, there was a soap explosion. A fourth soap appeared, and then a fifth and then another... There was one for ‘real’ men, one with ‘No Logo’, one with a jet flying to Tahiti on the packet and even one for kids claiming ‘No more fears’. How could soap be all that?

But all this did was to confuse people. Which soap is the one for me?

Soon the people of the town started to form little groups around the soap they used.

The women who drove big cars only used ‘Luxury’. Other women refused to talk to those who bought ‘No Logo’. And, ironically, the soap for ‘real’ men became a gay icon – they even started making it in funny shapes. They said it helped them enjoy it more.

Some time soon after, a new soap ‘Planet’ appeared. It wasn’t like any that had arrived in town before.

The packet said it wasn’t soap but a way to save the planet. And, they had the t-shirts to prove it.

They said those other soaps were made with nasty chemicals and that was causing hot weather, endangering animals, killing brain cells and polluting the rivers.

They didn’t want you to just buy the soap. They wanted you to come to a meeting where people stood on soapboxes.

They wanted you to join them in saving the world - one bar of soap at a time! They wanted you to join them in the charge of the soap brigade!

And that was the end of soap in that town.

Of course, people still used soap, they simply didn’t buy soap for soap sake anymore.
Does your brand focus on product features or customer meaning?

What is the unique position you own in the market?

What does your brand stand for?
The Real War on Talent

The Books - Double Act
Malcolm Gladwell
Outliers: The Story of Success
Penguin Group (Australia); Camberwell; 2008.

Geoff Colvin
Talent is Overrated: What REALLY Separates World-Class Performers from Everybody Else
Nicholas Brearley; London; 2008.

The Book Rapper Issue
Anti-Self-Help : How to Succeed in About 10,000 Hours, with a little help from your friends
Just over ten years ago, three executives from McKinsey and Co coined the phrase ‘The War For Talent’. It came out of a study into the hiring and promotion policies of corporate America. They found the best performing companies were recruiting the best and the brightest. Also, they were promoting them more rapidly than at other firms.

A popular book followed their report and HR departments around the world began a new fight to recruit better people.

This was an appropriate response to the way the world had shifted.

**Gone were the days where financial capital was the key to buying the means to production to gain market advantage.**

Arrived were the days where human capital has become the key factor to create, design, implement, manage and improve upon existing products. (See *The Next Ideal Tree*)

In an era of global competition, you really do need to be world class to make it to the top.

Human ability is now in high demand. All this sounded good in theory and the McKinsey report was just that.

The significance of their writings was tarnished by the collapse of Enron. They had been their number one disciple following the War For Talent message letter by letter. Rampaging egos and the demise of a workable culture ensured Enron imploded from within.

The great lessons from this fiasco were as follows:

**1 Talent**

Recruiting top people remains a good strategy as long as we are clear what ‘top’ means. IQ, SAT scores
and college degrees hint at one’s future potential but they are not the full picture. This is the myth of talent at work that prompted Colvin and Gladwell to write the books that they did.

2 Isolation
Promoting people rapidly can work as long as the entire organization is structured and managed well. In other words, smart people donít make smart organizations. More likely, it’s the other way round.

This is the second part of the Talent Myth - that we are successful in isolation. We need to build strong corporate cultures. When we drop solid performers into an ecosystem built for success, itís much easier for everyone to thrive.

3 Learning
The missing ingredient for many companies in the talent domain is the development of their staff. The Enron approach was to lavish rewards on the top performers, chastise the moderate ones and threaten the rest with dismissal if their game didn’t improve. Sound familiar?

McKinsey’s War on Talent has sparked a fresh debate. And, Book Rapper wants to point to the REAL War on Talent.

Itís not limited to recruiting the best and brightest. It’s not even in the domain of the corporation.

For many individuals, the window of opportunity to develop their own talent has already closed by the time they start their first job.

The REAL War on Talent is to give everyone the opportunity to be the best they can be.

And, it all starts with good parenting.

- We need parents to demonstrate the value of a strong work ethic.
- We need parents to coach, support and nurture the talent within our children.
We need our schools to further this work. And, we need a community that nourishes and supports all achievers.

We need to fight to expose and eliminate the hidden advantages that aimlessly promote one over another.

We need to distinguish the cultural legacies that thwart future potential.

We need to celebrate the opportunities that are around us everyday. This includes ignoring and challenging the media that deliberately dampens our enthusiasm to serve its own ends.

We need to promote hard work, deliberate practice and effort as desired virtues.

The REAL War on Talent starts with you right now. Who are you going to be?

And, this brings us to the heart of this talent RAP and Anti-Self-Help.

Gladwell’s work shows that success is ‘social-help’, not ‘self-help’. We need other people to be successful. No one does it on their own.

Also, the research from Anders Ericksson and colleagues that underpins Colvin’s push for Deliberate Practice. It contradicts the promises of many quick-fix charlatans.

Did we really think we could become the person we wanted to be from a one-day seminar? Or from a short-term diet?

Ah, the delusion of life... Yes, we wanted to believe because fundamentally, we wanted a short cut to success. Who really wants to put in ten years of hard work? Who really wants to practice for 10,000 hours?

I guess the few that do, deserve to be the top performers they are!
Success Myths and Realities

Success Myths
- Natural Talent
- Personal Success
- Fixed Mindset

Success Realities
- Work Hard
- Social Success
- Growth Mindset

For more on fixed or growth mindsets: Carol Dweck’s book *Mindsets*. 
How are you developing your staff?
Are you building your success based on ‘self help’ or ‘social help’?
Are you practising for 10,000 hours to be a world expert?
The Great Business Gestalt

The Book
Amy Shuen
*Web 2.0: A Strategy Guide*
O’Reilly Media; Sebastapol, Canada; 2008.

The Book Rapper Issue
The Great Business Gestalt: How Web2.0 Has Merged Your Business, Your Customers And Your Competitors.
At the turn of the last century a technology breakthrough caused a revolution in architecture. Industry had worked out how to make large flat panels of glass. Up to this point in the history of architecture, small panels of glass meant small windows, punched into the facades of buildings.

Philip Johnson’s *Glass House* (1949) is perhaps the most celebrated example of the new material in action. It is essentially a glass box with all four walls made of floor to ceiling windows. Despite the jokes about the neighbours looking in, it represents a landmark in spatial perception. Previously, there was a clear division between ‘inside’ and ‘out’. Now, at least visually, the two had merged.

Web 2.0 offers a strikingly similar perceptual shift in the way we view business. Traditionally, organizations were arranged with a number of clear divisions. We were the company and they were the customer. We created the products and they consumed them. This was management, over there was sales; and in that other building was manufacturing. It was even clear who our competitors were – they were the ones making similar products to us.

Now all that has changed. The Great Business Gestalt has arrived.
Gestalt is a German word. It describes a pattern or organization that is so unified as a whole that its properties cannot be derived from a simple summation of its parts.

Visual gestalts were prompted by Cubism and are best known as figure-ground reversals.

A famous example is the vase and the two faces. At times we can see the vase. Alternatively, we can flick our attention to seeing the faces. We can also see a third situation: the gestalt. Seeing both vase and faces simultaneously.

**Five Principles**

Amy Shuen offers us five principles of Web 2.0:

1. Users Create Value
2. Networks Multiply Effects
3. People Build Connections
4. Companies Capitalize Competence
5. New Recombines with Old

---

**The Common Denominator**

What’s the common denominator of these five principles? They’re all about sharing.

- Users create value by sharing content.
- Network effects occur when people share the network.
- Sharing is how people connect.
- Companies can only capitalize on their competencies when they share them.
- And, we need to share the new and the old to recombine them.

When we truly share something we are no longer talking about separate bits. We’re talking about connections, relationships and how things work as a whole. That’s a gestalt in action.

This is the new way to look at your business. We need to be able to see the faces of our customers, our product vases and both of them simultaneously.
Consider these examples…

**Decision Making**
Millions of users told Facebook they didn’t want the ‘Beacon’ advertising system. Facebook retreated. Who’s in charge the company or the users? The value of a social network, its social capital, lies in its members. The business is literally the customers. Facebook knew to retreat if they wanted to save their business.

**Data**
When we contribute to Web 2.0 sites we share information about who we are.
- Google knows what you search.
- Amazon knows what you read.
- Flickr knows which photos interest you.
- Facebook knows what you look like, your areas of interest and who you like to hang out with.
And the big question... Does the company own this information or should I? Customer and company have merged.

**Competition**

Business is also breaking down the illusion of competition. Instead of a head-to-head battle, IBM partnered with their biggest threat, the Open Source community. Amazingly Amazon opened its selling system to other booksellers. Jeff Bezos recognized the gestalt – there is no ‘us’ and ‘them’ only ways to build a bigger market for everyone. Similarly, ‘The Apple iPod Tree’ shows the web of connection.

**Ownership**

Like a good Steven King novel, it has so many twisting plots and intriguing characters it is best to view them as a single whole. Google Mashups offers a further entanglement.
HousingMaps.com blatantly uses content from Google Maps and Craigslist. In the good old days, this would have prompted a cease and desist letter from a reputable lawyer. Today, it is looked upon as making good sense for all three parties.

But wait, who owns the content? The old division of one person ‘owning’ and another ‘using’ has blurred too. At one level this entrenches the Google brand further into our lives. And, when it comes to branding, given it lives in the mind of the customer, it has always been a gestalt.

**Branding**

When I ring to say you’ve got my phone bill wrong again, I’m not just talking to customer service. I’m talking to the entire company. In my mind, they are the same thing. It is only your organizational mindset and your organizational charts that separates them.

**Intellectual Property**

Goldcorp’s crowdsourcing competition started from the viewpoint of exposing their Intellectual Property to anyone who was interested. As a result, competition entrants were telling the company where to go… and dig for gold. Who was leading who?

Open source software is neither company or customer. Or is it both in a new guise? And where does it live? There’s no physical headquarters, only a website address.

**Marketing**

Marketing has changed too. Douglas Atkin’s ‘The Culting of Brand’ confirms the marketing gestalt. First we survived ‘Mass Marketing’ where individuals were treated as a single group. Then we had ‘One-on-one Marketing’ where individuals
were separated from their peers. Now, we have ‘Community Marketing’ with the best of both worlds.

Individuals and groups are not separate things, just different parts of the same thing. And, that’s another gestalt!

**Products and Services**

Product and service have also merged. It used to be clear; a product was something you could stick in a wheelbarrow. But, as soon as we went digital, these divisions dissolved. Is Google search a product or a service?

The edges are blurred further when your sales team is instructed not to sell products but solutions. Is a solution a service or a product? Virtually every product now has service attached to it. Clearly it is both.

**Incorporation**

And, here’s the killer blow… The Great Business Gestalt says it’s time to think from the perspective of synchronization, integration, unification, coordination, collaboration and… “incorporation”. Yes, the very word that legally we use to describe a company means ‘gestalt’: an incorporated body. All-inclusive.

**Your business has become unified as a whole such that its properties cannot be derived from a simple summation of its parts.**

It is time to start thinking and acting from this perspective. You’ll need to, if you want to succeed in the Web 2.0 era.
How are you using the five principles of Web 2.0 to grow your business?

Are you thinking of your business as a set of parts or a unified whole?

How can you work with your competitors to build something bigger?
The Future of Your Brain

The Book

Gregory Berns

*Iconoclast: A neuroscientist reveals how to think differently*


The Book Rapper Issue

Eye Create: The Neuroscience of Personal Innovation
Exploring & Exploiting

The golden age of discovery was in the 15th century as explorers boarded their ships to discover the rest of the world. Once discovered, the next task was to exploit the riches found. Thus, the great era of Colonisation. The Spanish in South America, the British in India and the French in Africa were all seeking wealth for their homelands.

Now that the four corners of physical earth have been reached and exploited, it’s time for a new exploration race. NASA is taking one path outside our planet, to infinity and beyond! Neuroscientists, like Greg Berns, are exploring another area, our internal grey matter.

The current work of neuroscientists is mapping the future of our brain. By uncovering how our brains really work, in living people in real-time, they are laying the foundation for the future.

Transhumanism

Do you have fillings in your teeth? Do you wear glasses? Have you taken drugs for an extended illness? These are all early examples of Transhumanism. It’s where human beings use external technology to assist with internal bodily function.

Transhumanism is like Globalization. Whilst we presume it is a contemporary issue, it has been sneaking up on us for a few centuries. Globalization is at least as old as Marco Polo’s trek from Venice to China way back in the 13th century. Transhumanism may have begun even earlier. The Egyptians first used prothesis for missing teeth, toes and limbs a couple of millennium ago.

In recent years, electronic technology, biotechnology and nanotechnology have accelerated progress to new levels. And, the next
great era of Transhumanism is our brains. Or, more accurately, our nervous or neural systems.

**Transhumanism raises significant questions about what it means to be human.**

For instance...

- If you were paralysed would you get a micro-chip implanted to enable you to walk again?
- If your mother had dementia would you put a micro-chip in her brain?
- If you were suffering from Parkinson’s Disease would you let doctors insert stem cells into your body?

Whether we agree with it or not, the neuroscientists of today are laying the foundation for a new brain. Working out how our brain really works will tell us how to train our thoughts, use electronic supplements and design a diet of useful drugs.

---

**Training your Brain**

All parents want the best for their children. One approach to giving them a cognitive boost is to listen to Mozart’s music. A million dollar industry has been built around the Mozart Effect. Yet it appears to be a myth. The idea that we can train our brain is correct, in this case the application is not.

Neuroscience has shown our brains are plastic. This means they grow and change over time, just like your waistline. As a gym junkie will attest, it’s possible to change your body shape through continued and deliberate training. It’s looking more likely that we will learn how to train our brains in a similar way in the near future.

Are you willing to train your brain in the same way that Arnie trained his body?

**Eating for your Brain**

What we already eat changes our brains. For instance, Omega 3 fatty acids are known to
support brain function, eating chocolate releases natural opiates and alcohol acts as a depressant. Repeated use has a repeated effect on our brain structure.

Manufactured foods and drugs are currently quite distinct. Yet future manmade food may go beyond merely feeding our bodies.

**Instead, we might be eating to feed specific brain functions.**

Most of our current food is packaged based upon what it is made from. For instance, Corn Flakes. Our future food may be packaged based upon what they can do for us. Would you eat, ‘Calming Chocolate’, ‘Energetic Eggs’ or ‘Sexy Sausage’?

If antidepressants are useful for extreme cases of depression, then why not a cocktail of drugs for the rest of us who also want to enjoy living life to the max?
We know we have the drugs to produce the effects we want. We simply need to knock out their unwanted side effects.

In the near future, your level of Emotional Intelligence may be decided by what you eat for breakfast.

**Brain Machines**

Currently our thoughts are supplemented and complemented by external brains in the form of diaries, laptops, the Internet and Google. They’re all mind-enhancers! They enable us to remember things that otherwise we’d forget or know things we wouldn’t otherwise know.

Schoolteachers used to be the smartest person in the classroom. Today a quick thinking student easily surpasses them with access to Google. If we consider that carrying our iPhone or Blackberry is carrying our external brain, it’s a small step to imagine an implanted one. With nano-bots roaming through our bodies, our implanted brain can have its own personal army to fight those free radicals and to keep order.

The future of the brain is only part biological. And, this raises another possibility for the future: the proverbial thinking machine.

**Singularity**

Technologists have suggested that computers will be able to think like human beings within the next 20-30 years. Yes, that promise has been made and broken before. Simply because we didn’t get the timing right doesn’t mean it won’t happen. The Age of Singularity as it is termed, is just over the horizon.

And, here’s three simple steps to make it happen...

1. Our current neuroscientists are figuring out how our brain really works by imaging real-time brain function and human action.
2 We can apply that in new ways by marrying technology with our natural brains.

3 In marrying hard and soft brains we’ll work out how to build the best of both worlds and create the most intelligent brain of all.

Whilst social networking and social media is the new fuel for making connections with your species, the best is yet to come.

Imagine being connected through your neural net... Your brain - part biology and part technology - syncing with another human being as easily as a USB drive.

Talk about connection! Social connection might be a mere starting point for the ways that we'll be connected in the future. And, that is one future of your brain.

**The Matrix Effect**

What would happen if we combined all three effects together: training, diet and machines?

In the blockbuster movie *The Matrix* (1999), Keanu Reeves as ‘Neo’ is plugged into a machine and learns a lifetime of martial arts in a matter of minutes. The signs are pointing to this being one possible future for your brain.

As sure as Harry Potter’s Invisibility Cloak is slowly emerging from laboratories, your new brain is being invented too.
What external aids do you use to assist your brain?
Are you willing to train your brain in the same way that you train your body?
Have you noticed how what you eat and drink affects your performance?
The Future of the Newspaper

The Book

Joseph Jaffe

*Join the Conversation: How to Engage Marketing-Weary Customers with the Power of Community, Dialogue and Partnership*


The Book Rapper Issue

Talk With Me: How to Engage Your Customers in Your Marketing Conversations
Do you buy a newspaper? I used to. It was great to wake up with the paper thrown to the front door. Then, I could saviour a bowl of Rice Bubbles and toast whilst devouring the current events of the world. Heaven!

Nowadays, I pass on the paper. Occasionally, on the weekend, I’ll do coffee and paper. But, during the week, I’ll read the Internet version instead.

So what happened? Did life get too busy? The cricket scores explain it best for me. In the good old days when Australia battled the Poms for the Ashes in sunny England, the newspaper was a constant disappointment. It never gave you the latest results and you were left to wonder about the final score until the 6pm news on TV.

The newspaper had a deadline. At some point, the Editor had to say ‘Run the presses’ or whatever they did say.

When this call was made, it effectively, meant the news had stopped for that day. And, this deadline to print the paper, package it, despatch it and drop it on my doorstep had implications. It meant I didn’t get the latest cricket score.

**In our Internet world today, the news never stops. It’s continuous, 24 hours a day.**

There’s no artificial deadline for news to end. Today, I always have the latest cricket scores and the newspapers are now in trouble. Sales of papers are well down. This is not good news and it’s not the worst of it.

About 20% of newspaper revenue comes from paper sales. The rest comes from advertising. Competition for eyeballs from the Internet means declining advertising revenue for newspapers. And, that means big trouble.

The newspaper business model is cracked and likely broken without hope of repair.
Five Reasons Newspapers are Dying

Print
Fee Distribution
Local
General
One-way

Digital
Free Distribution
Everywhere
Specialist
Two-way
Google has atomized information. They’ve broken it down into its smallest bits. Or is that bytes?

- We can now go direct to the source, cutting out the middleman, the gatekeeper and the editor of taste and newsworthiness. Unfortunately, this is the heart of the money and business model for a newspaper. Why go to a newspaper for classifieds when you can go to a specialist site that offers much more. Employment, cars, houses, rentals, for sale. Each has their Internet equivalent. And, for general items, Ebay has swallowed the buy and sell column.

- Even better, Craigslist will let you post your ad for free. It’s hard for anyone to compete with that price!

- Finally, what does this have to do with the theme of this issue – conversations? Our newspapers are like traditional marketing, they’re one-way news. They talk at us. They stand apart from us. And, they decide what is news and what we shall

Here’s a few of the cracks in the newspaper business model...

- Newspapers are print and the world is now digital.

- To physically print a paper, magazine or a book is costly, especially compared to publishing on the web.

- It’s also costly to distribute your goods and it forces you to adhere to an artificial deadline.

- Print also allowed each town to have a local edition. Whilst the neighbourhood gossip was unique, each local paper simply repeated the same articles about the big wide world. That’s to be expected given they were all taken from the same newswire. On the Internet we don’t need this duplication. In web terms, once is everywhere.

- Newspapers are like department stores. Both business models are in decline. And, they’re both a generalist collection that attempts to appeal to a wide selection of tastes and interests. In contrast,
New technology is overturning the structures, organizations and institutions that flourished in the previous world. And, the practices that go with them.

**The Internet and digital technology are Weapons of Mass Disruption.**

Newspapers are one victim of this change. Traditional marketing based on advertising and PR is another. They’ve had their moment in the sun and now it’s time for something else.

If you were starting from scratch today, would you design a business like a newspaper? Hopefully not. It doesn’t look like it will be profitable for you. The big question for the newspaper is not how to preserve their traditional hold on news.
Under similar circumstances the music industry tried to sue their way out of trouble. And, this denial of the problem didn’t work either.

Instead, their future lives in the question: If you were to design a ‘news’ business today, what would it look like?

The same applies to your marketing and customer communication. If you were designing your business from scratch today, what would you create? Perhaps we can talk about it.
If you were starting your business from scratch today, what would you create?

Is your business model based on physical or digital economics?

What sort of conversations are you having with your customers and clients?
The Book
Joel Comm with Ken Burge
Twitter Power: How to Dominate Your Market One Tweet at a Time
Also featuring: Paul McFedries; Twitter Tips, Tricks and Tweets

The Book Rapper Issue
Twittergy: How to Succeed on Twitter
It doesn’t make sense! Who would have predicted that Twitter could take off in the way that it has? It’s too simple to make sense. Asking people ‘What are you doing?’ and limiting them to 140 characters hardly seems like a winning formula. Or, was it simply too obvious that most of us missed it?

**The clue is that the twitterverse is not an island. Twitter wasn’t created in a vacuum. Nothing ever is.**

Instead, if you follow the path you can see how it was built upon a phenomenon that was already in place.

Have you ever sent an SMS? Of course, you have. I bet you do it all the time. Millions of SMS messages are sent around the world every hour. Twitter is SMS on the web and back again. You can tweet on the web. And, you can tweet on your phone and post it to the web.

It’s also become a bridge between your offline mobile world and the online web world.

But, what about Instant Messaging? Wasn’t that already the web equivalent of SMS? Pretty much it was. It allows short, sharp messages sent to your personal contacts. You can even go back and forth and have a chat. And, and this is a really big AND, Twitter has added one crucial element that was missing in both SMS and IM.

Remember, our *Book Rapper* issue *The Great Business Gestalt*? In that issue we looked at Web 2.0 and the underlying driver: Network Effects.

A network effect is where one user impacts another. A traffic jam is an undesirable network effect – too many users make the road less useful.

Twitter taps into a positive network effect. As more people tweet, more people are drawn into the conversation.
A History of Connection Technology

One 2 Few

Many 2 Many

Blackberry
Mobile Phone
Twitter
Facebook
Ebay
YouTube
Wikipedia
Google
Blogging

Letter
Fax
Email
Web page

Movie
Television
Video Camera
Internet Radio

Camera
Telephone
Instant Messaging
Digital Camera

Town Hall meeting
Public Speaker

Face 2 Face
Small Groups
Telegraph
Radio
The secret to Twitter’s success in this regard lives in the transparency and openness of this network. On Twitter, you accumulate links to other people. You follow them and they follow you. You get to see all the tweets that your followers post and they get to see yours. Simple.

Where things start to really take off is that your followers can also search for, find and start interacting with any other follower. They can go through your list and follow everyone on it if they choose. More specifically, if I’m following you and I send a reply to one of your tweets, then everyone in my list sees my tweet and so does everyone in yours.

This clear visibility of tweets and followings allows the Twitter-virus to cross-pollinate people and conversations.

Where your SMS or IM contact lists are closed to other people, on Twitter your list of followers is open for everyone to see. Add the bridge between mobile and web and you’ve got a new worldwide phenomenon.

Clay Shirky pinpoints the big shift (1). SMS & IM are like the telephone, a one-to-one communication. Radio and TV are one-to-many communication.

**Now for the first time in human history, social media is a many-to-many communication channel. Now, that is a huge step forward!**

Again it all seems too simple. One tweet back and forth doesn’t seem like a worldwide event. And, it’s not. It’s when you combine critical mass that it turns into something else. This is important for your tweets too! Your following needs to be of sufficient size for you to get the effect.
In the earlier *Book Rapper* issue *We Blog* we discussed the effect of still pictures becoming moving pictures. To make the leap from mere photograph to movie, you need at least 24 frames per second. Any slower and it doesn’t work.

**To get the conversational effect of Twitter you need, not speed, but size. You need enough people to allow instant interaction.**

For instance, if you only have ten followers and you put out a question, you’re relying on these 10 people to be available at that time and to know the answer. In contrast, if you have 1000 followers, you’re more likely to get a response.

The same occurs at the massive scale of having millions of people around the world twittering. Twitter is a real-time event. It’s now! Thus Twitter will continue to be the launching pad for news as it happens. We’ve had the Chinese earthquakes (May 2008), the Mumbai Shootings (November 2008) and the Iran Election Crisis (June 2009). Three big stories all announced to the world and updated via Twitter.

The next great story might not happen in front of you or me, and it will happen to someone with access to Twitter. And, probably someone with a mobile phone and a camera. And, it may not just be observing, you might want to create some news. Anti-communist protestors in Moldova used Twitter to mobilize 10,000 people in an event that gained worldwide coverage. (April 2009).

Thus there appears to be two points of critical mass. For the individual twitterer the effect probably kicks in at around 100-1000 followers – depending upon your level of influence.

For Twitter as a whole, well… It’s already engaging more than 30 million people and growing at 15%
each month. Critical mass has probably already kicked in.

So, if Twitter has already reached a critical mass of users, where to from here? Critical mass doesn’t mean enduring success. For one, there are no dollars for the owners and investors. At some point, they’ll want to monetize their effort.

The other big question is the fickleness of the online community who are constantly jumping onto the next big thing.

However, in Twitter’s case a magic ingredient may be brewing in its midst: end-user innovation.

Twitter began as a simple broadcast medium. It’s morphed into a conversational powerhouse not through clever innovation by the owners and creators, but by its end-users.

That’s so big it deserves to be repeated. Twitter is the powerhouse it is today because of end-user innovation. The #hashtag, the @reply, searching and the 10,000 plus third-party applications have taken Twitter to a new level. And they were all created and/or inspired by the end-users.

And, that’s just the beginning… Twitter is currently just for humans. No, your cat can’t have an account. Well, at least not officially. But, maybe your home alarm system can and even your houseplants can.

Would you like a tweet when someone’s breaking into your house? (2) What about a reminder that your plants are getting thirsty? (3) Would you like a reminder from your fridge to get milk on the way home? Would you like to know if you have all the ingredients to cook your favourite recipe?

These might sound as inane as most tweets.
Yet, this is the real future of Twitter. It’s called the Internet of Things. And, tweet by tweet, they’re going to revolutionize everything.

When objects start talking to each other your life will be very different. When everything on the planet gets connected relationships will change.

And, here’s the biggest possibility of all. One of the keys to climate change is our energy use. We waste so much energy because we don’t have sufficient controls to manage it efficiently. Consider, all the street lights that are left on throughout the night in all the cities around the world. Yet, most of the time there’s no one there to see the light.

What if the streetlights could tweet each other… “Get ready, someone’s coming #yourstreet.”

To tweet is a human thing. It’s a new conversational channel that’s uniting the world in real time. That’s a revolution in itself. And, that’s just the beginning.

When all things electronic start talking to each other we truly will have a new world experience. So, the next wave of Twitter might just be ‘Home Tweet Home’.

References
(1) Clay Shirky, TED Video, Ted.com
Postscript

Twitter has since gone public with an IPO and is now earning money from advertised tweets.

Twitter is currently one of the ten most popular websites on the planet with over 270 million active users each month and over 500 million tweets posted every day.

Whilst the stock market values Twitter at over $30 billion, they are yet to make a profit. In the fourth quarter of 2013, they declared a $500 million loss.

Ironically, whilst Twitter has become a cultural icon of our digital age, their future remains uncertain.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter
How could you use Twitter to deliver real-time news to your fans, followers and customers?

How could you use Twitter to spark two-way online conversations with your clients?

How could you revolutionize your products by adding real-time information?
How to Save the World

The Book
Steve Zaffron & Dave Logan

*The Three Laws of Performance: Rewriting the Future of Your Organization and Your Life*

The Book Rapper Issue
Frog Power: How to Take Giant Leaps in Your Performance
In the good old days, it was politically correct to sit back and smile as the beautiful blondes in the Miss America pageant were asked what they would like to achieve if they were successful in winning the title.

As they fluttered their fake eyelashes, their answers typically were of the order ‘In my time as Miss America, I would like to create world peace’. Whilst one can respect their good intentions, it was pretty obvious that it wasn’t going to happen. Only Superman saves the world, right? And, boy, do we need him right now.

Our planet’s in a bit of a mess. If Earth was taken to a doctor they’d probably send it off to palliative care.

We have our usual set of wars going on... Terrorism, Afghanistan, Iran, Israel, Palestine... The problem today is the toys we play war with are big enough to blow the planet apart.

We also have our new friend Climate Change. It’s clear our weather is changing and we’ve built our cities, agriculture and lives in the wrong place.

Whilst we can glimpse the damage we’re doing on land, the deeper issue appears to be in our oceans. We’re wiping out our fish population like a bulldozer knocking down a forest.

Add the melting polar caps and the changes in ocean currents and it’s fairly obvious why we’re getting more ill-tempered Hurricanes like Katrina.

Plus we’ve got a few too many people to feed on the planet. And, too many of them are going hungry. We have enough food, just a few too many restrictions on who gets to eat it.

Our poor animal cousins aren’t doing much better - and this includes our transformational leaping frogs! We’re letting them die off in record numbers never to be seen again.
They’re homeless and hungry too and more park benches and soup kitchens are not going to help!

**It’s clear we’ve got a few things to fix.**

**And, that’s the real problem. We’re trying to fix things on a world-scale one small step at a time.**

Sure, I’m taking a shorter shower. And that’s not going to clean up the planet! Sure, I’m using my car less. And that can only drive things so far. Sure, I’m separating my plastics from my vegetable matter. And that effort’s all going to waste!

As our dear friend Albert Einstein once said: We cannot solve a problem at the same level at which it was created.

And I repeat, that’s the real problem. We keep trying to solve problems and that’s what got us in this mess in the first place.

We did a bit of this, then a bit more of that and then we got this. Now we’re trying to do a bit less of this and a bit less of that and hoping it will all go away. Not bloody likely!

Each incremental step we add merely distracts us from the real issue. It lets us think we’re doing something about it and the only thing we are doing is wasting time and avoiding the real issue.

**The human condition has a wonderful ability to numb the pain if only we wait or distract ourself for long enough.**
We do it around our health, our weight, our relationships, our money, our jobs...

Zaffron and Logan have too much credibility in the world of business and academia to come out and say what they’re really writing about.

The ‘unsaid’ in their book is:

**Conversational technology could save the world!**

There you go, they didn’t say it and now I have.

Now that the cat’s really out of the bag (hopefully an endangered one), let’s take a look at how we can transform two of the world’s biggest ills.

Let’s start with the wars... What is really being fought over?

Forget what the media are trying to tell you. None of the wars are being fought over land or oil or revenge for terrorist attacks.

That’s way too simplistic - the answer is even more simple than that.

We all just want to be happy, right?

And, the shortest path to unhappiness is to compare ourselves to someone else. And, that’s what these wars are all about.

Someone else has something that I want and I’m going to take it from them so I can have it too. That’s it. Sounds like a couple of three year olds, doesn’t it?

Now, it’s relatively easy to sit in the comfort of my own suburban dream castle and tell the world they’re wrong. And, it is much easier when you’re detached from it all.

**These wars are all being fought based on past injustices. Their past is driving their future.**
Fixing and Transforming Problems

FIXING = SHIFTING CONTENT

TRANSFORMING = SHIFTING CONTEXT
The problem is they’re trying to correct the past and balance the ledger which simply leads to more conflict.

**Trying to balance the ledger comes from the ‘fix the problem’ mentality.**

We need both sides to sit down and notice how things are occurring to them.

We need them to get in touch with their almost certain future of more fighting, more loss of life, more pain, more unhappiness. More hurt simply causes more hurt.

We need them to complete their past. And that ‘them’ is us! We’re part of the problem for letting it go on for so long.

We need them to acknowledge their righteousness and wrongness.

And, we need them to create a new future for themselves.

A future they can live into in a way that honours not just them and their families and their ancestors. It needs to honour and value all of the people who have been hurt, maimed and killed; as well as the ones who have done the hurting, the maiming and the killing.

A compelling future is also what’s needed to stop the flood of violence in our cities. It’s a cry for help by people who are rightly or wrongly feeling alienated.

**Let’s help them create a future that’s not dependent on destruction.**

This can be as simple or as difficult as we want to make it.

My tip: this process needs to work at both the leadership and community level.
The leaders can provide the symbolic change and the community can breathe life into it. The head needs to be connected to the heart.

Enough of wars! Let’s talk about Climate Change.

**No, let’s stop talking about Climate Change. That’s the problem!**

It has now been confirmed by the best scientific minds and research on the planet that our climate is changing at a higher rate than it has previously - or at least for the past few hundred years. End of story.

Let’s accept that and now get on with Climate Design.

We know we can influence our climate so let’s be deliberate about what we’re going to create. It’s time to stop trying to fix our past environmental mistakes and start designing our way forward.

**Design is deliberate change and it’s time we we’re deliberate about the changes we want to make.**

On May 25 in 1961, US President John F. Kennedy invented a future that focussed an entire country for a decade - to land a man on the moon. Forty years after this achievement was completed, I believe we’re now ready for a new challenge. A global challenge.

A challenge not out of fixing something that is broken and not out of righting past wrongs.

It’s time for a deliberate challenge that will drive humanity and our planet forward for the next decade or even the next century.

What’s going to be the invented future that our current generation is aspiring too? Let’s hope it’s
not to get a good job and build a McMansion in the ever-expanding suburbs. Been there done that.

And, who's going to create it? Whilst eyes are focussed on Barack Obama to be the next great white hope (sic), this is a distraction and an abdication of our own responsibility.

Global change starts with personal change.

It's time to stop looking at the world 'out there' as our source. It's time to focus on the world 'in here' because this is where our future arises from. As Gandhi once said, "We need to be the change we want to see."

In the end it's up to you and me because we are us and them. What's our invented future?
Is your future more of your past?
Which problems are you trying to fix in your organisation?
What is your invented future?
The Book
Geoff Colvin

*The Upside of the Downturn: Ten Management Strategies to Prevail in the Recession and Thrive in the Aftermath*

Portfolio, Penguin, New York, 2009

The Book Rapper Issue
Gloppportunity: Your Global Once-In-A-Lifetime Opportunity
Did the Depression create the radio industry? Despite an unemployment rate of 25% in the US, social workers found evidence to support this claim.

Geoff Colvin in *The Upside of the Downturn* takes up the story… (Page 77)

“Social workers found that Americans who needed to raise money to pay the rent would sell their refrigerators, bathtubs, telephones and beds before they would part with their radio.

“The effects of the Depression-induced radio mania were transformative for radio set manufacturers, radio station owners, radio performers, advertisers, ad agencies, and many other businesses.”

So what happened? My hunch says radio connected people. It enabled them to share their difficult times in the same way attendance at a Sunday Church service soothes the ills of the week gone by. And, the radio technology was simple enough and cost-effective for people to tune in everyday. This was a rare highlight in an otherwise dreary era.

**The Global Financial Crisis has not been as severe as the Depression. Yet it’s impact has been sufficient to indicate it has accelerated two major historical turning points.**

Both scenarios herald a triumphant victor and a vanquished opponent.

The first case was as certain as the motorcar out-driving the horse. Digital technology was always going to out-compute print. It was simply a matter of when.

And print media is now struggling. We spoke of the demise of the newspaper in our *Book Rapper* issue *Talk With Me*. 
Sluggish advertising during the current downturn along with highly targeted online websites have demolished their revenue base.

To complete the trinity, magazine circulation has slowed and book publishers are hard-pressed too.

Access to self-printing further erodes the street value of the publishing houses.

Even one of the famous directories of choice is losing its lustre. Yellow Pages is finding customers no longer want to receive their free book -seemingly because they no longer use it.

So, what is this new weapon of choice?

It’s probably stuffed away in your handbag or sitting in your pocket.

**The digital smartphone is here and it’s broken the link to print.**

Our desktop computers still sit wirelessly connected to our desktop printers keeping us in contact with that bygone world of paper.

Yet, the smartphone has none of it.

**Mobility rules over print!**

We can now, not only get all that same old stuff in our hand instantly, we can get much more.

Google’s recent release of real-time traffic info on Google Maps for our major cities signals another landmark moment.

Static is simply no longer fast enough. We want it now and we want it live. Tweet! Tweet!

Our second example is also a case of a ‘when’ that has been brought forward due to the global downturn.
China are returning as the economic heavyweight champion of the world.

The US had grabbed the honour way back in 1890 – from the Chinese. Now they’re wresting it back.

Colvin points to predictions that suggest China will replace the US as early as 2015! Previously this wasn’t expected until 2030. And, thanks to the global meltdown, that timeline has been accelerated.

David Thomas of *Think Global* reports from his recent trip to China that the locals refer to the GFC as the AFC – the American Financial Crisis. (1)

Given that China’s economy is likely to grow at around 8.5% again this year it’s clear they’re only concern is slowing down growth.

Ironically, as this page is written, it’s one year to the day that Lehman Brothers closed it’s door.
And, there are still whispers the US economy has not hit the bottom just yet.

There appears to be a few cracks in their economic foundations that may yet cause further tumbles.

As we come to the end of this story, we herald the start of two significant new beginnings:

**The smartphone out-computing print.**

**And, the Chinese out-capitalizing the US.**

Look out for more grand transitions. This may just be the end of the beginning.

**References**
(1) David Thomas website: ThinkGlobal.com.au
Are you taking advantage of mobile or still stuck in the static world of print?
Are you ready to capitalize on the opportunities now available to you in China and the East?
What other grand transitions have you noticed happening around you?
The Book
Iggy Pintado

Connection Generation: How connection determines our place in society and business


The Book Rapper Issue
Global Glue: Connect and Grow Rich
Is Facebook a time waster? Are my Twitter followers worth anything? Will my LinkedIn connections get me a job?

In the narrow world of social media, these are good questions to ask.

And, the answer to all these questions is... Well, it depends. It depends on your context and your motivation. What do you want?

**Connecting with our fellow human beings is highly important at a number of levels.**

Iggy Pintado tells the story that our success in life is shaped by our level of connection.

The better your connections the more resources you can tap into, the more opportunities you can create and the more value you can generate and share. Connect and grow rich!

We also define who we are by our connections. Or as Descartes might have said: *I connect therefore I am.*

At a happiness and healthiness level, connection is sustenance for survival. It’s Vitamin C for your soul.

Studies show that social connection is a major factor in our level of satisfaction and wellbeing.

It even plays a role in diminishing the level of depression one may experience.

**Yet, there is something even more fundamental about connection. And, it all comes back to sex!**

Doesn’t it always? Or is that just a bloke talking with his you-know-what? Iggy points out, sexual intercourse is the ultimate intimate physical connection.
And, it highlights the one potent reason to create connections... to find a partner to procreate with and further your bloodlines.

If you really want to know why you bother with Facebook then that’s it... we’re all driven to meet people to create potential future benefits.

That’s not a choice, that’s hard-wired. It’s a survival instinct to connect with our tribe.

There’s a great debate going on about the role of language. Did we acquire it? Or is it a built-in, default factory setting?

Language is the real glue that binds us. It allows us to share our minds so that we can collaborate, participate and procreate.

It allows us to connect deeper and more fully. And, now that we have our Connection Technology where do we go from here?

Some might scoff that connection technology is more of the same. Yep, we’ve always been connected and it just makes it easier.

I hear ya! I can click on anyone on Twitter and follow them. They don’t even have to ask. I can stalk their tweets as much as I want. And, with a little generosity, they might even follow me back.
So what’s the big deal? That answer lies in movies and blogs.

You may recall our earlier *Book Rapper* issue *We Blog*. In it, we suggested that new effects emerge out of acceleration.

When we accelerate things to the right speed, we get a new and different effect. At the right speed, still pictures became movies. And at the right speed, web pages became conversational blogs and microblogs.

Digital connection is following the same path. At the right speed, the globe will be glued together like a single brain, buzzing and pulsing, moving, shaking and thinking.

Thinking? Maybe... remember your spell checker doesn’t really know how to spell, it just gives the impression it does.

Likewise, get enough connections and the planet could appear to think...

Is this the cure for global warming? May be, may be not. It could be weird, it could be wonderful.

At the least, global connections are shrinking the world faster than Susan Boyle can say ‘viral storm’.

It shrinks the world into a global village. It connects people, information, objects and ideas. The connected world goes round and round. It unites us, it celebrates us. Humanity grows.

The new model of the world appears to be one of reverse evolution. The evolutionary model of cell reproduction shows one cell splitting into two and so forth.

The connected world reverses this... two cells merging into one. Is this our connected future? The world coming together...
How connected are you?
Review your address book and reach out so someone you haven’t been in touch with for a while. What can you share today to deepen your current connections and build new ones?
Where Are We Now?

The Book
Jeff Jarvis

What Would Google Do?

The Book Rapper Issue
Google Think : How to Survive, Thrive and Jive in the Digital Economy
Over the past 20 years we’ve seen a few changes... The Berlin Wall has fallen and the Cold War has ended. We’ve had some localized wars in Iran, Iraq, the Mid-East and Bosnia. We have a black US President, a worldwide Climate Crisis, had Globalization riots and we’ve mapped the human genome. The BRIC nations are now economic powerhouses, the American Financial Crisis has hit the world and even my football team Geelong finally has won a couple of premierships after a 40 year absence!

On the technology front, a few new gadgets have landed on our doorsteps too. The Internet is here, we’ve all got mobile phones, GPS in our cars and MP3s on our iPods. Reality TV and social media have invaded our lives and Gen X, Y and tweens have grown-up.

On the business front Enron has come and gone, the dot-com boom busted and Google has become one of the most profitable companies on the planet.

So what’s going on? What’s driving these grand transitions? How do we explain all this upheaval? Let’s take a short history tour. A really, really short tour...

The history of the world in five words... Survive, Grow, Make, Inform & Create.

Got it? Let me explain a little bit more...

At first, as we emerged from our ape cousins, life was a battle just to stay alive.

Then, we planted some seeds. We stopped being nomads, built some permanent dwellings and started to grow what we needed.

Next, we started making more and more tools, culminating in the Industrial Revolution. Natural sources of power were replaced by man made mechanical solutions. Our towns became cities.
After this we moved to an era focused on making better things. To do this we invented computers and the Internet to use information and our newfound knowledge to automate and personalize things. This is now - the Information Age.

Coming soon is the next great phase, the Creation Age. In an era of biotechnology and nanotechnology we will have god-like power to create new species. An exciting thought and a story for another time.

Does that explain things? Does that put Google in its rightful place? Perhaps not, a few more distinctions may be needed.

Some people hold the view that we've moved beyond the Information Age or Computer Age. They suggest we're in the New Economy, the Digital Age, the Internet Era, the Conceptual Age, the Connection Age and even the Attention Age.

Where we're at right now clearly depends upon what map you're using. My map has the five great eras with some sub-eras within.

Within the Information Age, there have been two distinct sub-eras. The first is the rise of the computer and the second the rise of the Internet.

The first era of computers emerged during the Second World War. The need to decipher codes directed attention to code cracking machines and computing power.

In the 40 years it took to create giant mainframe computers and then shrink them to our desktops an array of great businesses rose to worldwide success.

IBM, Microsoft, Ikea, Oracle, Dell, Apple, Bloomberg, and Nike represent some of the success stories of this era.

In the 1980s, the war machine also prompted the development of the Internet. The US government
wanted a decentralized system to manage their missiles.

The Internet arrived on our PCs around 1995. Fifteen years later we have a new set of industries and businesses emerging.

This is where Google belongs. Along with Ebay, Amazon, Linux, Skype, Firefox, Wikipedia, Facebook and Twitter.

Whilst these examples are not all financial successes, they do represent a new way of thinking and organizing the world. And that’s what Google and this issue is about.

Which reminds me of an old story about a successful businesswoman who goes back to visit her favourite business professor many years later.
Whilst chatting in the professor’s office, the ex-student notices an exam paper on the desk. She points out that the questions are the same as when she was a student. To which the professor replied,

“The questions are always the same, it’s the answers that have changed.”
How has your organisation changed since the Computer Age?
How has your organisation changed during the Internet Age?
How might you prepare for the Creation Age?
The Virtual Presenter

The Book
Carmine Gallo

*The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs - How to be Insanely Great in Front of Any Audience*

The Book Rapper Issue
iPresent : How to enthrall your audience like Steve Jobs
**True Connections**

Do you know where the word ‘phoney’ comes from? If you guessed it had something to do with the ‘telephone’, then you’re on the right track.

The first phone conversations were not considered to be real conversations. They were literally ‘phoney’. Today this word is synonymous with ‘fake and false’.

Most of us now accept phone calls as being a valid way to catch up, chat up and make up with our friends, family and colleagues.

Other communication modes have taken a similar path. Email was considered not a ‘true’ communication mode. It didn’t let you express your tone of voice. : )

Txting wasn’t either – particularly because it did a hatchet job on our traditional ways of spelling.

Now, social media is under the same spell. They’re not ‘real friends’, they’re merely ‘friendlies’.

---

**New Communications**

Digital technology and media is changing the way we communicate. Many of our communication industries and professions are morphing too – or at least they need to be!

- Newspapers are no longer viable in their current form.
- Independent Bloggers have become a compelling new media channel.
- Mass media advertising has been Googled.
- Traditional PR has a feather-like impact on public opinion.
- The movie industry has been outplayed by the gaming revolution.
- Speakers Bureaus and other brokers are losing their voice. Google lets you cut out the middle-man and tap into the source directly.
Presentation Modes

This *Book Rapper* issue is centred on keynote presenting.

And like everyone else, professional speakers will need to heed the seeds of digital media. Their path sounds like the introduction of the telephone: a move from the natural to the virtual.

A natural conversation is *face-to-face*, in *real-time* and *two-way*.

A virtual conversation may be the opposite:

- **Face to Place**: Like a phone call, the speaker and the audience are in different places.
- **Time-Reel**: Like an audio recording, the listener tunes in when it suits them.
- **One-Way**: Like TV, the audience is not able to interact with the speaker.

Or, it may be a hybrid, some combination of these three styles. Let’s have a look at how this might play out…
The Typical Presenter
The typical stage presentation occurs in front of a live audience. It’s face-to-face, in real-time, but one-way.

The voice on stage commands the audience. And, the audience’s role is to be respectfully passive. In other words, sit down, shut-up and listen.

There may be time for questions and this is usually just a bit at the end.

The YouTUBE Presenter
The YouTube Presenter places a pre-recorded presentation on a website, DVD or an iPod.

Whilst the initial recording may be in front of an audience, the viewer of the digital recording watches face-to-place, in time-reel and one-way.

This new avenue is an essential part of the speakers promotional armoury. Most speakers have one on their website. They ideally would have a YouTube channel. And, they may include video footage on a DVD dollar-earning product.
The Webinar Presenter

The Webinar Presenter has the opportunity of the Typical Presenter from a distance. They can present a one-way talking, slide-driven, multi-media presentation.

However, built-in to the typical webinar technology are tools for two-way conversations. You can run polls, ask questions and have multiple speakers in multiple locations.

You can also record the event for listeners to view it later as a time-reel.

Typically the Webinar Presenter is not in front of a live audience, although the technology makes this easy to do too. Webinar technology is a highly flexible medium that can be used to cover all the bases.
The TWITTER Presenter

This one is a game changer! Remarkably, all six presentation modes could be involved. It plays out as a Typical Presenter with an added interactive twist.

The Typical Presenter stands in front of a live audience in real time. In that live audience, listeners may be tweeting in real-time to an online audience that is face-to-place.

The presenter may be doing all the audible talking in the room. And, another conversation via the Tweets may be happening simultaneously in the same room and outside it.

The presenter has a choice. They can try to stop the tweeting and this would be reputational suicide. That’s not a real option.

The real choice is whether they interact with the Tweeps or not.

The reflex action may be to resist - why get involved with something that you don’t quite understand...

Be warned! There have already been cases reported where presenters have been ‘Twit-attacked’ and been oblivious to it. Could you imagine having the roomful of people you’re addressing laughing at you without you knowing? Disaster!

And, the tweets stay on the public timeline for anyone else to see at a much later date. Total disaster!

The better question to ask is: What could happen if we interacted with the Tweeps?

Think of it as a chance for real-time feedback.
That sounds simple enough and it’s not so easy.
It’s the same challenge organizations are facing from digital media.

**Gone are the days of one-way communication.**

Advertising and PR professionals are struggling as a result.

And, now our Professional Speakers accustomed to their one-way messages are next in the firing line.

It’s time to adopt a two-way presentation mode. Alternatively, you risk being attacked in the very room in which you’re presenting. And, you may not even notice!

**Speakers beware!**
What’s your preferred presentation mode?
How can practice and explore presenting in different modes?
Will you stick to one preferred mode or become confident in a range of modes?
For Future Sake!

The Book
Roger Martin
*The Design of Business: Why Design Thinking is the Next Competitive Advantage*

The Book Rapper Issue
Design Advantage: The Secret to Creating Long-Term Value
Our fearless leaders have proven not to be so fearless. Their recent efforts in Copenhagen to create a compelling future for the planet came up stunningly short - again.

(2009 UN Climate Change Conference)

Hope was offered and then disappointingly frittered away.

As a designer, there was one thing visibly missing from the summit. There was no Design Thinking.

Our leaders were bogged down by their Reliability Bias. (see next page) They were overburdened with the need to prove their decisions would work. They were unable to collaborate because they were stuck in their own self-interest. And, there was very little future vision on offer.

Are today’s politicians anti-designers? Are they capable of leading the way?

We don’t need more science, more analysis or more rhetoric.

We need Design Thinking. We need visions, plans, options, choices and strategies.

We need to stop talking about Climate Change. That’s a given, the climate is always changing. It’s time to start talking about Climate Design. What do we want our climate to be like? Let’s start that conversation.

Let’s set some desirable goals to achieve for everyone on the planet.

I’m not suggesting that we get an expert team of designers together to make choices for everyone else. This is what is wrong with our political systems. And, we don’t want to replace BIG Government with BIG Design.

The utopian visions of the Modern Movement proved this didn’t work. Grand plans have a habit of becoming grand disasters.
The Reliability Bias

Reliable
Predictable
Consistent

Learning
Growth
Innovation
What is needed is both local and global design. Like a good corporation we need some big picture strategy. And, we need to give the team on the ground the room to implement and innovate in their own way. Owning their way is crucial. This level of diversity is what makes the world so interesting. Think Italy or France with it’s national flavours and distinct regional spiciness.

We need to infect our leaders with Design Thinking. We need to infect everyone else with Design Thinking too.

The goal is to have conversations for the future. The goal is to build a future that we all have a say in creating. The goal is to have a future that is compelling, desirable and exciting for everyone on the planet.

The single best thing you can do to help is to develop your awareness and abilities as a designer.

The more of us thinking this way, the more choices we will all have.

Remember, it’s for your sake. It’s for my sake.

And, it’s For Future Sake!
Is your vision for the future based on more of the same?

What are the assumptions your current future is based on?

How can you improve your Design Thinking skills?
Your Personal Opportunity of a Lifetime

The Book
Chris Brogan and Julien Smith
Trust Agents: Using the Web to Build Influence, Improve Reputation and Earn Trust
Wiley & Sons; Hoboken, NJ; 2009.

The Book Rapper Issue
Web Line: What You Need to Succeed Online
In a recent *Book Rapper* issue *Gloportunity* (derived from Geoff Colvin, *The Upside of the Downturn*) we pointed to a Global Opportunity of a Lifetime.

Namely, the recovery from the Global Financial Crisis. Or as the Chinese refer to it: The AFC, the American Financial Crisis.

Now, it’s your turn. It’s time for your Ploppportunity: your Personal Opportunity of a Lifetime. Are you ready? Here it is...

The secret to being happy is to do the things you love. And now you can more easily than ever before. You can pursue your vocation, live your passion, follow your dreams AND be rewarded.

If that sounds like the usual cliches you get from the Pop Psyche, Self-Help movement then you’re right. It is. And, it comes with a tantalising twist.

The twist is... All the tools you need to be successful working in your passion are now available. And mostly for free!

I bet you didn’t expect that!

If that sounds too good to be true, then it’s time to throw away your cynics hat - at least for the moment - and catch up with what’s going on.

One of the keys to wealth is the access and ownership of the tools of production.

A couple of centuries back, if you owned the land you owned the food supply. Farming the land was a relatively straightforward way to run a profitable business.

The sticking point was owning the land - you were either born into it or you were a worker for life.
More recently, the key tools of production were the machines that drove industry. Think factories. Again, you either owned the tools or you worked for someone else to access them.

Today, the tools of production are now available for free for anyone who wants to take a walk down to their local library. And, I’m not talking about those dusty old books.

At most local libraries they have computers with free Internet access. Voila! Access to the tools of production for free.

Today, this means access to blogging tools such as WordPress or Blogger, access to Twitter, LinkedIn, Squarespace, Facebook, YouTube, Digg, Reddit, Google, Delicious... the list goes on.

What’s even better... the tools of production come with an instant and automatic distribution for your creative outputs. It’s called the Internet!

Do you get what’s being said here?

**These web tools are the tools of production for today. Master these and you’ll create wealth for yourself and probably others.**

You can go down to your local library and do it for free or you can spend less than a $1000 and have it all at home. Imagine that, a wealth making machine in your spare room!

The only other thing you need to add is: YOU! Your ideas, your passion, your effort and your persistence.

The web is your oyster! And you no longer have any excuses to not be living your dreams. And that’s what this issue is about, your Ploppportunity!

Go for it!
How to Create Wealth

- Own the Land
  - Work the Land
- Own the Machines
  - Work the Factory
- Access a Computer
  - Work the Web

Agricultural: Own the Land, Work the Land
Industrial: Own the Machines, Work the Factory
Knowledge: Access a Computer, Work the Web
Are you working in your passion?
Are you mastering the key web tools?
How can you leverage these web tools to create wealth for yourself and others?
The Future of Work and Organisations

The Book
Seth Godin

Linchpin: Are You Indispensable?

The Book Rapper Issue
Purple You : Your New Career
Lets draw some loose threads together... *Linchpin* is another piece in the puzzle that we’ve been tracking at *Book Rapper* through most of our issues. It revolves around two questions:

- What does ‘work’ look like in the digital age?
- And, what does an ‘organization’ look like in the digital age?

The starting point for this conversation is:

**If you were designing work/organizations from scratch today, what would you create?**

Here’s eight design principles for today’s work and organizations linked back to the *Book Rapper* issues that discuss these topics.

## Leadership

Command and control leadership styles have flowed from the military. In a decentralized world, they no longer work. For instance, you can’t control the Internet. To be a leader here you need to build trust, respect and reputation. Lighthouse Leadership is a very different way of looking at the world and interacting with people. And, with generational change, the old leadership styles are less tolerated, further prompting new styles.

*Book Rapper* issues to refer to:

- Leaderful (Decentralized leadership)
- Web Line (The shift to online leadership)
- Becoming You (The starting point for leadership)
Decentralized
The Internet is the defining and all pervasive structure of modern society. Any new organization would reflect this and be decentralized in its design and structure - or at least a fusion of centralized control and decentralized flexibility. There are two basic ways of doing this: Either separate business units that run independently of it’s parent company, like GE. Or you can decentralize the customer experience, like Ebay. This presents significant benefits with regard to building to scale through network effects especially through Internet technologies.

Book Rapper issues to refer to:
- Leaderful (Decentralized organizations)
- The Great Business Gestalt (Network effects)

Connection
Traditional organizations were composed of various elements. Marketing sat over there, sales was here, production down there and management upstairs. No more. The Internet and digital technologies dissolve the boundaries between these internal divisions. It also promotes co-operation between suppliers at an unprecedented level and with crowdsourcing the line is blurred between customer and company. Add the ability to connect with people globally and you have a huge opportunity to work in new ways.

Book Rapper issues to refer to:
- The Great Business Gestalt (Building ecosystems)
- Global Glue (The importance and power of connection technology)
- Google Think (Rethinking the architecture of your organization)
Social
We can no longer rely on corporations and governments to address social concerns such as climate change, the homeless or poverty. New organizations will focus on fulfilling social needs. Aligning to social causes is the key to branding. And, it’s the lesson learnt from tribes forming on the Internet. Corporate Social Responsibility is mere icing on a stale cake. Social Orientation designs the organization to create a profit that is channelled to fulfil the social need. The younger generations won’t be interested without it. And, through social media the means to connecting around events and causes is quicker and easier than ever before.

Book Rapper issues to refer to:
- Brand Worship (The potency of a cause in your brand branding)

Leisure
The work modes of the Industrial Age reflected the machinery of the time. We did standardized jobs in fixed locations and set blocks of time to produce standardized products marketed in standardized ways. In the Information/Knowledge/Digital Age we can work wherever our brain is and whenever we feel like it on stuff that appeals to us. The customized niche of designing your own work and lifestyle is the promise of the Leisure Age. It’s the Leisure Age not because we are doing nothing, it’s because when we work in our passion/gift our work becomes our pleasure and our leisure.

Book Rapper issues to refer to:
- The Four Hour JOLT! (The 40 hour week retires)
- How to Think Right (Outsource left-brain work)
- Make Money From Niches (Long tail of niches)
- Purple You (The demise of standardized work)
Eight Principles for Designing Work and Organisations
Not for Profit

Previously, owning the means to production was the key to making profits. And there was a clear distinction between who owned it and who the workers were who ran it. This line has blurred and possibly evaporated. Now, via the Internet the tools of production are in the hands of everyone with access. As a direct result the pursuit of profit changes.

Even a so-called not-for-profit organization needs to pursue profit to fund the future. The big difference is the need to make profit to fund a future and then make profit on top of that to feed shareholders. Take away the shareholder level, add the freemium models and the gift economies and all of a sudden the pursuit of profit and ultimately capitalism changes.

*Book Rapper* issues to refer to:

- The Great Business Gestalt (Blurring of customer/company)
- Make Money From Niches (Change in digital economics)
- Web Line (Shift in access to production)
- Purple You (Shift in access to production)
Conversation

Traditional big-media technologies like TV, newspapers, advertising and PR promoted one-way conversations. The Internet and digital technologies have replaced this with two-way conversations. This is a significant shift that requires organizations to be re-designed to listen, initiate, enable and participate in conversations internally and externally with customers and suppliers. This is crucial for getting things done.

*Book Rapper* issues to refer to:
- Talk With Me (How to build your organisation based on conversations)
- We Blog (Talk with your customers)
- Twittergy (Converse with your customers in real-time and online)
- Brand Worship (Involve your customers in your brand building)

Design

In an era of dramatic change and global hyper-competition, the need for design, innovation, growth and learning within an organization is crucial. A decentralized structure allows innovation to be embedded in the DNA of the organization through crowdsourcing and micro-business units. Crowdsourcing is also central to brand building as it engages the customer almost to the point of ownership. And, building a design thinking culture and work practices unites internal teams.

*Book Rapper* issues to refer to:
- The Bees Wees (Examples of crowdsourcing)
- Design Advantage (The Importance of Design Thinking in organisations)
- Brand Worship (Involve your customers in your brand building)
Rethink your organisation by asking:
If we were starting today what would we create?
If we were starting today what would we stop doing?
Which of these eight principles could disrupt your organisation?
The Books - Double Act
Adam L Penenberg
*Viral Loop: The Power of Pass-It-On*
Andy Sernovitz
*Word of Mouth Marketing: How Smart Companies Get People Talking*

The Book Rapper Issue
Smart Growth : How to Multiply Your Customers
What are the common threads linking decentralized marketing, word of mouth marketing, viral loops and viral networks?

The short answer is it’s the same question we’ve been asking in all of our Book Rapper issues:

**What does it mean to be living in the Information/Knowledge/Digital Age?**

Typically, it shows itself as the old way and the new way.

In this case, the old way is mass media. A few people sent out the same message to everyone and we happily took notice via our newspapers, TVs and radios.

That’s doesn’t seem to be working anymore. We’re spending less time passively reading, watching and listening.

And, we’re now spending more time on social media actively creating our own content.

So what’s driving this change?

The simple answer is on the next few pages...

**The fundamental building block of our time is information.**

And, as we review the properties of information we can begin to grasp the strange new world in which we now live.

A land where information rules...
**Inconsumable**
Goods disappear through use. Information does not disappear. It remains unchanged however much it is used. Read this. Read it again. And again and again and again... You can have your cake and eat it too!

**Indivisible**
Goods can be divided and used. Like fruit in salad. Chop it up, use some now, some later. Information can only be used when it constitutes a set. Half a book will only tell half the story. Half a sentence will not

**Untransferable**
Transfer a physical good from A to B. It is moved completely from A to B. Transfer information and the original information remains at A. Do you copy?

**Accumulative**
To accumulate goods don’t use them. Information cannot be consumed or transferred. Use it again and again, it accumulates anyway. Information quality can be improved by adding new information.

All information, whether in the form of a physical drawing/letter or digitally in a computer, has these four properties. However, the acceleration of information interchange through the use of digital technology has added four more properties...
Circulation
Send a letter. One for each person, physically copied and sent. Send electronic mail. Send once and received by as many people as desired. Easier circulation, circulates more information.

Concentration
Information can be concentrated. Store an entire set of encyclopaedia on one CD. More information can be condensed into greater concentrations. Concentration promotes portability. Portability changes the user’s relationship to it. New tasks in new places.

Dispersion
Information circulated and retrieved very quickly, updates quickly. The new quickly displaces the old. The time is now… The time is now… Feedback loops maintain usefulness through the continual updating of the ever changing display of current information.

Feedback
Send information. Each receiver can re-send it in a new form and context. Blogs, Twitter, Facebook and Digg. Scatter and multiply the original message. Easy circulation spreads the original information further.
The Properties of Information

Traditional Properties
- Inconsumable
- Untransferable
- Indivisible
- Accumulative

New Digital Properties
- Circulation
- Dispersion
- Concentration
- Feedback

[Diagram showing the properties]

Traditional Properties

New Digital Properties
Can you get a glimmer of insight into how all this fits together? Let’s explore some examples...

The old mode of one-way advertising relies on control. I don’t see that anywhere on this list of information properties! It attempts to control, coerce and contain the information. On the web in particular, this doesn’t work.

Instead, the opposite seems to flourish. Word of Mouth marketing is the active circulation, dispersion and feedback of information. It’s an idea that’s reused, recycled and passed on. And it works because information cannot be consumed, doesn’t need to be transferred and is easily accumulated.

That sounds a lot like the Internet, blogging and social media to me! A million and one people all feeding off each other, sharing content, recommending stuff, adding comments and making the total pie a whole lot bigger.

And the key piece to remember here is that social media is media created socially - by you & by me.

With access to the tools of production, we can now create and distribute our wares instantly and globally.

And, via our own online networks of friends, followers and connections we can create our own viral loops. And, with the help of Ning we can start our own viral networks.

Marketing just changed because Information Rules!

Previously published:

Geoff McDonald, Beyond the Electronic Drawing Board, Archiquar, Melbourne, 1996.

Direct Source: Jones, Barry; Sleepers Wake! Technology and the future of work; Oxford University Press; Melbourne; 1982.

Original source: Dr. Yoneji Masuda.
Compared to 10 years ago, how are you marketing yourself differently?

How are you using the Information Rules to re-purpose your content?

How does information flow into, through and out of your organisation?
Social Media’s Killer Application

The Book
Jeff Howe

Crowdsourcing: How the Power of the Crowd is Driving the Future of Business

The Book Rapper Issue
Crowd Creation: Social Media’s Killer Application
How much time do you waste everyday on Social Media? Be careful, that’s a trick question. It presumes Social Media is a waste. Is it? Has Social Media ever created anything useful for you? Or for anyone else?

What do you get out of posting a tweet, a blog or a ‘What’s on your mind’ update?

To focus on the micro action of a single tweet or similar is to miss the point of Social Media.

**The key to understanding Social Media is to call it ‘User Generated Content’**.

Mass Media like TV, Radio and Newspapers were created by a few and spread to many. The user was the consumer not the creator.

Social Media is created by many and spread to many. That’s why it’s called ‘social’ right? Every one gets to play.

The simplest creation you can make on social media is your status update. Yeah, it’s innocuous, trivial and sometimes annoying. And it’s important and we’ll get to that in a moment.

We can also create a blog post, video, tweet, web page, comment on someone else’s page, a Digg vote or a slideshow.

Once we’ve done this we want to share right? This is our chance to connect with our friends, families, colleagues, clients and strangers from around the world.

**And this is the important second step of Social Media. Sharing, connecting, friending, linking... being part of something.**
Social Media makes it very easy to connect. Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter even give you hints and suggestions as to who to connect with. Instead of hanging out with people who just happen to be living close by we can now mingle with people with similar interests regardless of their location. This is important. Local communities and even family units are being superceded by interest groups.

And this leads us to our third step. Once you’ve connected enough people together you have the critical mass to make something happen.

This is Crowd Creation. And here’s the killer piece... when a crowd glued together with similar interests gets together what are they going to do?

Most likely, they’re going to want to create something together.
Now, we’re not talking spontaneous creativity here. A little more structure is needed than that. Someone needs to declare a task, design it into bite-size chunks and structure it so the efforts of all can be combined into one big thing.

**Voila! Crowdsourcing - by the people, for the people.**

Social Media is more powerful than simply connecting with other people. That’s merely the foundation for the pursuit of something bigger than all of us.

The real power of Social Media is to create something that only a committed crowd of people can achieve. It is a Weapon of Mass Construction. And that means crowdsourcing. That’s the killer application.

And it’s going to reorganize organizations and how we get things done. As they say in the classics, many hands make...
How are you creating social media content?
How are you sharing your content?
How are you connecting people?
What are you building with your crowd?
What’s in it for them?
The Next Ideal Tree

The Book
Jim Stengel

Grow: How Ideals Power Growth and Profit at the World’s 50 Greatest Companies
Random House, UK, 2011

The Book Rapper Issue
Ideal Growth - The Key to Sustainable Growth
How do you value a company?
Traditionally, it was based on the value of the physical assets.

And, what’s the big picture context for the brand ideal? It’s value to the business is clear to see here. This is the basis for Stengel's book.

However, we suggest the rise of social media will prompt a further shift to include social capital in future market value calculations.

1980: Industrial Age

In 1980, almost the total market value of companies listed on the Standard & Poors index (S&P) was based on the value of their tangible or physical assets. For example: cash, office, plant and equipment.
2010: Information Age

By 2010, the Millard Brown Optimor research (discussed in Grow) shows that tangible assets only make up 40-45 percent of the total value of companies on the S&P index. (left tree) And, 30% of the grand total is directly attributed to the value of the brand (right tree).
2015 : Social Age

As these words are being written, Facebook is about to launch its Initial Public Offering (IPO). This float represents a new way to value companies that includes the value of their customers or social network. Expect this to be normal soon.
Postscript

The Facebook IPO, launched on February 1, 2012, was one of the biggest ever for technology and Internet companies.

It raised $16 billion, the third largest amount ever.

Facebook priced its stock at $38 per share which valued the company at $104 billion - the largest stock valuation of a company at that time.

Whilst the stock price fell below the launch figure for the first 12 months of trading, it has since doubled to over $70 per share.

With over a billion, yes, a billion users, Facebook is the poster child of digital media globally.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook
What is the most valuable part of your business: your physical assets, intellectual property (including your brand) or your social capital?

How can you increase the value of your business?
The Book
Eric Knight

Reframe: How to Solve the World’s Trickiest Problems

The Book Rapper Issue
Wicked Thinking: How to Solve Complex Problems
In the late 19th and early 20th Century physicists began to explore the world of the atom. It unlocked entry into a world beyond our senses. It was a world that we could only experience conceptually.

**Wicked Problems present the same challenge.** Whilst we can experience their effect, they’re too complex for us to see, hear and fully grasp.

To manage our Wicked Futures, we explore some of the influences making the world more complex. And, some of the skills, capabilities and competencies you could develop to assist you in working with Wicked Problems...
Seven Wicked Drivers

- **Globalisation** - more people from different cultural backgrounds, speaking different languages with different customs interacting more often.

- **Global Decisions** - more decisions at a global level will need to be managed that impact multiple countries and regions, e.g., Climate Change, War, Resource Allocations.

- **Digital Connectedness** - more people and more things are being connected digitally and when one changes it updates and impacts the next.

- **Data Explosion** - more data is being collected everyday ranging from Internet activities and product purchases through to recordings in CCTV cameras.

- **Innovation Acceleration** - faster prototyping for new products and ideas accelerates the process of creating ever more new things.

- **Transhumanism** - more technology adaptations incorporated into the human body including chip implants multiply our capabilities.

- **More knowledge** - the simple creation of new insights has a flow-on effect of creating even more knowledge.
Wicked Skills

What wicked skills will you need to tackle the complex inter-woven world that lies ahead?

- Design Thinking
- Experimentation
- Big Picture Thinking
- Intuition
- Pattern Making
- Trend Analysis
- Collaboration
- Conversational Technology
- Conceptual Mapping
- Being with Uncertainty
- Resilience
- Acceptance of Not Knowing
- Flexibility of Response
- Creating Possibilities
- Working with Incomplete Information
- Process Driven Solutions
- Crowdsourcing
What issues are you currently working on that may be wicked problems?
Which of the seven Wicked Drivers are impacting you the most right now?
Which of the Wicked Skills are you developing right now?
How to Lead with Social Media

The Book
Warren Bennis
On Becoming a Leader

The Book Rapper Issue
Becoming You
For a long while, the West never really understood the East. Perhaps we still don’t.

One of the most profound examples of this can be seen in the adoption of the Eastern art of meditation.

When seated meditation was first witnessed by Westerners it was met with bemusement. To watch someone sit cross legged and not move for 30 minutes was starkly contrasted with the thought of watching a good game of football.

To state the obvious, someone who was meditating was clearly not doing anything. And, clearly, this missed the point of the exercise.

In recent times, meditation has become more popular in the West. It is widely and primarily promoted as a means to release stress.

In other words, it is promoted as a means to an end and not an end in itself.

In the East, meditation is meditation. In the West, it is something you do to feel more relaxed.

Whilst greater calm is an admirable and desirable quality, the Buddhist view of meditation suggests any relaxation benefit is merely a side-effect. The true benefit is to stop and reflect. Meditation is training for concentration, mindfulness and awareness. It is one pathway for unlocking new ways of being.

And, this is precisely the point that Bennis is making.

In the West we have missed the point of leadership. Leadership is not an end in itself. It is the side-effect of fully expressing yourself as you take action to fulfil something worthwhile.
Being fully self expressed implies creating your own sense of identity - another side-effect. And, when this is authentically expressed you’ll naturally create your own pathway in the world.

This is the activation point of leadership available to all of us. It is born in the moment we choose to create our own path.

**Ironically, leadership is born when we choose not to follow others. At the least, to stop following them blindly.**

Some of us accept the leadership challenge in fragments of our lives, yet too few take this on as their life's work. For instance, being a leader as a parent and not in the community. Or being a leader at work and not at home. Or, being a leader in our studies and not in our health.

The West has missed this crucial insight into the origin of leadership on several counts.

The obvious lack of leadership highlights the problem. It is not so much that we admire so few corporate leaders or despair at the quality of our political candidates, it’s that so few of us consider ourselves to be leaders in our own lives.

**Yes, I’m talking to you!**

Three glaring points stand out where we have missed the point on leadership.

**ONE** Leadership occurs primarily in organisations. By definition, leaders require followers and it’s easiest to find them in organisations. Unfortunately, this has cemented the view that authority determines leadership. Many wait to be promoted before showing up as a leader.

**TWO** The most popular modes of organisation have been the military and the corporation. The military has a particular style of leadership that has become a dominant force. It’s reliant on control, following orders and pushing authority.
Whilst the modern corporation is less like this, the learned culture of ‘how to be a leader’ has promoted few alternative role models.

THREE The education of leadership has been turned into a commodity.

Education is important. And, as Bennis suggests much of it is mere training disguised as education. Instead of learning how to be a leader, we read about it and we talk about it. Useful and insufficient.
The good news about leadership is that this is all about to change.

As Bennis suggests, you need to know your context before you can lead it. And, the context of leadership has changed because the context of organisations has changed.

The Internet is the new, all pervasive model of our time for organisations. It is the opposite of the hierarchy that shapes the military.

Instead, it is decentralised, nobody owns or controls it, it’s open-ended, constantly changing and accessible by all.

And, this provides our entry into the art of being a leader through social media.

Social media is called social for a reason. In the first instance, it means the democratisation of media. It’s no longer in the control of the few, it’s now in the palm of many as your smart phone and iPad. And, it’s social because we can all join in and interact with others.

Social media is the new leadership platform.

It not only sets the tone for how to lead, it is the place where leadership is birthed and played out. Authority and control does not work here as followers can leave in a single click.

Instead, you need to lead with an idea, a mission, a cause, a purpose, a vision.

Or as Bennis suggests, you lead by expressing yourself fully in the pursuit of something you deem worthwhile.
Others may naturally follow, and when they do, leadership is born.

How we engage our audience in the pursuit of our goals determines our success in fulfilling our purpose and therefore our performance as leaders.

Significantly, this is leadership outside the walls of formal organisations. This is also what Bennis is pointing to.

Leadership is a natural human activity. It occurs whenever people decide to work together.

Bennis’ book is both profound and lightweight. It is profound for the time in which it was written. And, the paradigm shift it signals.

Little surprise it provoked the creation of the study of leadership, and Bennis as the leader of leaders. And, with the unfair advantage of hindsight, reviewing this text 23 years later, it merely scratches the surface of a wide and deep chasm worthy of a lifetime’s exploration.

The study of being is a potent pursuit.

It is based around how we construct our worldviews, the role of the observer, managing conversations and emotions, plus how we use our physical body as a carrier of our way of being.

A tipping point for this book is possibly Bennis’ connection with Werner Erhard, founder of EST.

Bennis completed EST in 1979 and was later a consultant to Erhard. (1) The EST conversation is about being. It is about self-expression. And, ultimately, it’s about leadership.
Perhaps, this type of training is better suited to developing leaders rather than the academic version that feeds us today.

Bennis may have stumbled onto something way more significant than he imagined at the time. And, in our new world of social media his context of becoming a leader is becoming more and more important.

Reference
(1) http://vectorstudy.com/management_gurus/warren_bennis.htm
Are you a leader through the position you hold or through the action you take?
Are you fully expressing yourself in the pursuit of something you deem worthwhile?
How are you leading with social media?
The Book

Jim Collins

*Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don’t*


The Book Rapper Issue

Greatness: What to Focus on to Transform Your Organisation
Bill Gates

Most people know that he dropped out of Harvard, went onto found Microsoft and became the richest man in the world.

It’s a sexy story of sweet success - skipping the slog of more study and being rewarded with all the riches you could imagine. This version of Bill Gates’ path is a little light on the details and ultimately, a little misleading.

Hollywood Heroes
It’s a Hollywood tale that relies on the view that you shouldn’t spoil a good story by telling the truth.

And, in particular, if we only have 90 minutes to make a compelling movie then we’d better leave out the dull and boring bits.

Before Harvard
What most people don’t know is what Gates did BEFORE he went to Harvard.

As the son of wealthy parents, Gates was able to attend an elite private school in Seattle.

As fortune would have it, the mothers club decided the school needed a computer. Today this sounds normal. But, back in 1968, many colleges didn’t even have computers, let alone high schools.

Bill became hooked on computer programming. He programmed during the day, throughout the weekend and he even snuck out of his bedroom window to program at night.

This tendency to time-warp transformation clouds over the day to day reality of how people succeed. It over emphasizes key turning points at the expense of what happens before and after. A more complete story about Gates exposes this myth of success...
He was doing 20 to 30 hours a week of programming whilst still in high school. By the time he arrived at college he had more programming experience than most of the people who were teaching him.

10,000 Hours
One of the key ideas that Gladwell presents is the concept of “10,000 hours”.
To be world class at anything takes about 10,000 hours of preparation and practice. That’s three hours everyday for ten years. And, there are no shortcuts.
There is no evidence to suggest that talented people are able to do it in less time.
Gates had clocked up his 10,000 hours of practice in high school. And, therefore, he was probably one of the few people in the world at that time that didn’t need to go to Harvard!

Discipline and Focus
Jim Collin’s book Good to Great tells a similar story from the point of view of the organisation. His path to greatness is one of discipline and focus.
He suggests the keys to success are to have a focussed leader without an ego. One who works solely for the good of the organisation. He suggests a focus on getting the right people on the bus - those who are prepared to work diligently and to forward the common objective.
He suggests a key point of focus toward what you can be great at. And, to use this as a defining framework for decisions.
Finally, he suggests you simply spin your flywheel. In other words, produce the results you said you would. Then, gain momentum from this success to produce your next set of results. And, so on... Little wins breed famous victories.
Equally, Collins points to the lack of evidence that suggests you need a charismatic leader, a growing market or a unique technological advantage.

**One Million Hours**

None of this is necessary because his message is simple: stay focussed, work hard and produce the results you said you would.

And, if we re-calculate the 10,000 hours principle... If it takes an individual 10,000 hours to become world class.

Then, perhaps it takes 100 people to each produce 10,000 hours of focussed effort and practice to create a great organisation. That’s one million hours.

And, this is not turning up for work time. It’s not serving customers either.

This is one million hours building the systems, the culture and the organisation.
The pathway to success and greatness is within this classic book.
It’s not sexy and it is relatively simple.
The real challenge is sticking to your game plan.
And, that’s why so few people and so few organisations are great.

**Whilst success may be sexy, getting there is less so.**
Are you playing for short-term or long-term success?
Are you putting in your personal 10,000 hours?
Is your organisation pursuing greatness?
More...
3 Ways You Can Explore Further

This Book
To sharpen your insights re-read it. And, discuss the questions at the end of each BIG Idea chapter with your colleagues. An audio version of this book is also available.

The RAPs
To deepen your thinking across the full range of topics in this book (and more) subscribe to Book Rapper and read the 30 minute visual summaries of these books.

[BookRapper.com]

The Books
Immerse yourself in a single topic by sourcing the original books and reading them.
Other Books

Here's some of the other books we've rapped at BookRapper.com
About the Author

Geoff McDonald is an innovator and design thinker who helps business leaders prepare for the future by understanding what is going on in their marketplace today.

Geoff is a former architect having studied and practised in Australia, the UK and the US. He has presented at international design conferences in Australia, Canada and the US.

This is Geoff’s fifth book. Previously, he has written about the future of architecture, an innovation guide to new products and a story for children.

Learn more at: GeoffMcDonald.com

Connect with Geoff here…
What the #$%?! is going on?

Geoff McDonald
Book Rapper, Melbourne, Australia
© 2007-14
There is no inevitability as long as you are willing to contemplate what is going on.

Marshall McLuhan