Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. Esther Dyson’s column about Nacchio incident can be found at http://www.edventure.com/conversation/article.cfm?Counter=8648145.

2. I’m convinced Nacchio was perfectly capable of annoying the audience all by himself. Clay Shirky, also in the room that day, felt the mood shifting, and wondered why until someone pointed out the blogging on a nearby computer screen. He told me:

   “Now, normally, a blog entry like this would take a day or so to ripple outwards, but because this was such a wired crowd and, frankly, because Nacchio’s talk was so dull, a lot of people were catching up on their blog reading during the talk, and even people not reading were near people who were. So the whole thing, from discovery to publication to spread, got really compressed, and basically happened during the time he was onstage.

CHAPTER 1, FROM TOM PAINE TO BLOGS AND BEYOND


4. Bimber also observes that the Founders based their new nation essentially on information. An informed electorate was necessary to self-government. The Federalist papers, newspapers, and other writings were the beginnings of the world’s first information-based society.

5. Tom Standage’s The Victorian Internet (1998) observes the remarkable similarities in rise of 19th-century telegraph networks and the modern Internet, including stock market bubbles, absurd predictions, and, in the end, the rise of an enormously powerful tool for communications (http://www.tomstandage.com).

In the early 1970s, big newspaper companies persuaded Congress to pass a “newspaper preservation” law that limited antitrust enforcement. The law let competing newspapers merge their advertising, printing, and circulation staffs while maintaining separate newsrooms and publishing two papers. My company, Knight Ridder, enjoys the fruits of several such Joint Operating Agreements, as they’re called. If there was ever a justification for this law, which is doubtful, the Net makes it less justifiable now. The nation would be better off if the law was repealed.

Direct mail has also pulled advertisers away in large numbers, notes Stephen B. Waters, publisher of the Rome Sentinel in upstate New York. “In 1979 they rejiggered the rates to begin to suck up advertising to keep postponing until the next elections a day of reckoning because of a bloated, expensive labor force,” he wrote me. “The advertising dollar has gone to Direct Marketing, not radio and television. It still is the case.”

I rely on somewhat fading memory, not archives, for the details of my XyWrite programming-assistance story.

Usenet newsgroups live on today in many forms, including “Google Groups” (http://groups.google.com).

Left-wing groups were also using these systems to organize, but from my observations at the time, not as effectively.

The MIDI standard (http://www.midi.org) revolutionized music, and continues to do so.

For example, see the Pacific News Service (http://news.pacificnews.org/news/).


Justin Hall: http://www.links.net.

Being available worldwide isn’t the same as being seen worldwide. In his essay, “Power Laws, Weblogs, and Inequality” (http://www.shirky.com/writings/powerlaw_weblog.html), Clay Shirky observes that in a system such as the blog arena, “where many people are free to choose between many options, a small subset of the whole will get a disproportionate amount of traffic (or attention, or income), even if no members of the system actively work towards such an outcome. This has nothing to do with moral weakness, selling out, or any other psychological explanation. The very act of choosing, spread widely enough and freely enough, creates a power law distribution.” But he adds that newcomers can gain significant audiences nonetheless.


NOTES


24. In the early 1990s, after many of the core pieces of Stallman’s software project had been created, Torvalds, then a Finnish college student, wrote a “kernel,” the core element of what became Linux. It’s important to recognize, as Torvalds gladly does, that Linux derived from Stallman’s original vision.

25. Stallman and others in the free software movement strongly object to the “open source” terminology. For more on why, visit the Free Software Foundation’s site (http://www.fsf.org).

26. Proprietary software makers and some security experts dispute this, saying open code is not inherently safer. But “security through obscurity” is plainly not a workable answer, either.


29. Leonard Witt, professor of communications at Kennesaw State University in Georgia (http://www.kennesaw.edu/communication/witt.shtml), persuasively argues that blogs and other bottom-up journalism are doing what advocates of “public journalism”—the idea that journalists have an obligation to further civic discourse and improvement—have been pushing for years, with limited interest from professional journalists. Witt says “intermediaries are no longer needed as public journalism morphs into the public’s journalism.” See the essay by blogger Tim Porter, who delves deeply into these subjects, for more on this notion (http://www.timporter.com/firstdraft/archives/000246.html).


31. 50 Minute Hour: http://www.50minutehour.net/archive/2001_09_01_index.htm.


CHAPTER 2, THE READ-WRITE WEB

35. The Guardian, one of the most prominent national newspapers in the United Kingdom, offers thoughtful, hard-hitting journalism from a slightly left-of-center perspective. In the weeks before the 2003 Iraq war, the site saw a big increase in visitors. This happened to most serious newspapers, but The Guardian’s traffic boost came in large part from Americans. What were they looking for? No one is absolutely certain, but Simon Waldman, who runs The Guardian’s online operations, told me he believed many of the American visitors were looking for something they couldn’t find in the U.S. press: a different perspective from the relentlessly pro-war coverage.
they were seeing at home. I leaned in favor of the war, but I was appalled at the lack of nuance in American journalism during a time when about half the population opposed the war.

36. Scribner, 2002
47. 20six: http://www.20six.co.uk.
51. Instant messaging is also one way people spread news, mostly in the U.S., but SMS is much more global and destined, as devices become more mobile, to be the headline service of the Digital Age.
52. Perseus, 2002
53. Rheingold’s Smart Mobs web site continues to follow this evolution: http://www.smartmobs.com.
56. Full disclosure: I’ve been a guest several times on the program.
NOTES


CHAPTER 3, THE GATES COME DOWN

66. For considerably more detail on the Lott incident, see the case study from the Shorenstein Center at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government (http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/2004/03/08). Blogger Mickey Kaus (http://slate.msn.com/id/2075444/#darkmatter) says some well-timed emails from a Democratic political operative played a role, though this is less clear.

70. The primary source for this section is a translation from a book by Chinese journalist Zhang Shumei, who played a key role in these events.
73. Slashdot: http://slashdot.org
76. Tobacco Control Archives: http://www.library.ucsf.edu/tobacco.
78. Greenwood Pub Group, 1914.
82. A company called Dinan (http://www.dinanart.com) sells software upgrades for the BMW line, removing a governor that limits top speed in the U.S. Although I can’t see why this is needed—and can imagine many improper uses—BMW’s Big-Brotherish settings are also annoying.
84. Tron Project: http://tron.um.u-tokyo.ac.jp.
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86. CNETAsia: http://asia.cnet.com/newstech/communications/0,39001141,39127700,00.htm.

CHAPTER 4, NEWSMAKERS TURN THE TABLES

98. The assumption of accuracy is not automatic, and the Pentagon severely compromised its credibility in April 2004 in a similar circumstance. According to The Washington Post (http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A28729-2004Apr20.html), the Defense Department “deleted from a public transcript a statement Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld made to author Bob Woodward suggesting that the administration gave Saudi Arabia a two-month heads-up that President Bush had decided to invade Iraq.” Woodward provided his own transcript. Will journalists and sources be posting dueling transcripts in the future?

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CHAPTER 5, THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED


195. At a dinner in Vermont while I was visiting the campaign, an old friend of Dean’s (and mine; I lived in Vermont for almost 15 years until the mid-1980s) turned to me as I was describing my positive impressions of the Dean Internet activities and said, “But Howard’s such a Luddite.” Vermonters, I discovered, were amused by the former governor’s Net savvy, because he’d been reluctant, at best, to bring the most advanced technology into state government until well into his latter terms. Another person at the table offered, “But he learns fast.”
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133. The Schwarzenegger campaign was an exception. Local TV covered the recall and the candidates’ positions with surprising fervor, perhaps due to the actor’s star power.
139. Note some parallels here with journalism (and other institutions being affected by the Internet)—threats to all kinds of centralized power structures from the edges, where technology gives disproportionate capabilities to individuals.

CHAPTER 6, PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS JOIN THE CONVERSATION

146. Slate Fraywatch: fray.slate.msn.com/id/2099475/.
148. As we’ll discuss in Chapter 9, blogs and other discussion sites are constantly fighting a battle against trolls and spammers; it’s an arms race, but I’m hopeful that we’ll be able to keep far enough ahead of the bad guys to hold onto the value of the conversation.
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153. Like so many journalism organizations, the Charlotte Observer’s excellent work has disappeared behind a pay-per-view firewall. You can find the hurricane coverage, or some of it, in the nonprofit Web Archive: http://web.archive.org/web/20010307020840/http://www.charlotte.com/special/bonnie/0828dispatches.htm.
154. Tom Mangan blog: http://tommangan.net/printsthechaff,
155. CNN to Online Journalism Review: http://www.ojr.org/ojr/workplace/1049381758.php,
156. Olafson fired: http://www.bostonpress.com/issues/2002-08-08/hostage.html/1/index.html,
157. Dennis Horgan blog: http://denishorgan.com,
158. The Nieman Reports back issues are, perversely, available only as PDFs: http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/03-3NR/V57N3.pdf.
159. So are some broadcasters. Minnesota Public Radio (http://www.mpr.org) looks like it will lead the way, with a variety of programs designed to bring listeners into the process.
167. In May, Patterico, whose real name is Patrick Frey, told Online Journalism Review’s Mark Glaser that he’d contacted the Times not as a blogger but as an interested reader. His impact was no less real in any event. See http://patterico.com/archives/002026.php.
168. Minnesota Public Radio’s Michael Skoler put it well in an interview on Leonard Witt’s Public Journalism blog (http://pnet.org/weblogs/pnettoday/archives/000172.html) when he said: “If ‘establishment’ media organizations can plug into the energy and wisdom of the collective brain of the public, we’ll bring the strength of traditional journalism—editorial judgment, fact-checking, truth-seeking—into a new age of better, more trusted news coverage. If we don’t do this, I think the unfiltered, weblog-type model of journalism will overtake traditional media with its sheer energy and we will lose a powerful way of informing the public about critical issues in our democracy.”

BBC call for people’s photos: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/talking_point/2732695.stm.


http://www.hypergene.net/webluniversity.html.

BBC iCan: http://www.bbc.co.uk/ican.

What’s not unlimited is people’s patience for reading long articles; invariably, when I encounter a lengthy piece that I want to read carefully, I print it out first.

Could an OhmyNews-like operation work in the United States and other countries? It’s difficult to know, in part because there are different legal issues. But the indications are that the potential is there. One of the best U.S. community news sites I’ve seen is called iBrattleboro (http://www.ibrattleboro.com), based in Brattleboro, Vermont, where the daily quasi-monopoly newspaper is owned by one of the more rapacious chains. From my distant perspective, iBrattleboro consistently covers important events and issues that the newspaper all but ignores.


I started requiring my Hong Kong students to create blogs in 1999, when the software I used was still in “beta” form, and the concept itself was virtually unknown.

New York University student portfolios: http://journalism.nyu.edu/portfolio/.

Do bloggers need editors? I was part of a panel on blogging and journalism where that topic was discussed at length. J.D. Lasica reported on it in Online Journalism Review: http://www.ojr.org/ojr/lasica/1032910520.php.

CHAPTER 7, THE FORMER AUDIENCE JOINS THE PARTY


Rheingold’s comment came at the PopTech (http://www.poptech.org) gathering in Camden, Maine.

Groklaw: http://www.groklaw.net.

Jones interview: http://www.linux.org/people/pj_groklaw.html.

Hoder’s Editor:Myself blog: http://hoder.com/weblog.
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195. Google News does post some flagrantly biased stories from other sources, however.


199. In focusing more on public affairs–oriented sites in this section, I don’t want to slight any of the more topical online journalism being done. Technology has been a prime example of how cyberspace, where speed is of the essence, can beat paper. CNET’s News.com service (http://www.news.com) has been a stalwart of excellent tech coverage, as has The Register (http://www.theregister.co.uk), a British-based site that is both smart and sassy in its coverage. Both sites are essential reading for tech journalists.


210. I’m squeamish about this kind of thing because it raises ethical questions. The connection was clearly stated on the Gizmodo site, however, so at least there was full disclosure. Ultimately, Denton said, readers will decide on the credibility: “If you’re pitching bad stuff, readership will decline.”

211. The cost of launching a personal blog is much lower, ranging from free to a few dollars a month plus the cost of the computer and Internet access.


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CHAPTER 8, NEXT STEPS

220. As Hal Varian and Carl Shapiro noted in their important 1999 book, Information Rules (Harvard Business School Press), Metcalfe’s Law relies on what economists call “network externalities.” This is the notion that the larger the network, the more attractive it will be to users in most cases—and the harder it will be for a new entrant in the market to get people to switch.
221. David Reed’s own explanation of his “law” is on his site: http://www.reed.com/Papers/GFN/reedslaw.html.
222. I’m particularly indebted to Howard Rheingold for his observations, in conversations and his writing, which have helped clarify my own understanding of the power of these various laws.
226. Andrew Grumet has been experimenting with video as RSS “enclosures,” delivered to a desktop (or other device) as needed. See http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/tech/bitTorrent for more information.
227. Advertisers saw this potential long ago. In Hong Kong in 2000, a friend showed me a mobile phone that let him know if a nearby store was having a sale.
chapter 9, trolls, spin, and the boundaries of trust


244. The photo was debunked by the urban legends site Snopes.com: http://www.snopes.com/photos/politics/kerry2.asp.

245. This is not a new phenomenon. As Paul Martin Lester, communications professor at California State University at Fullerton, observes (http://commfaculty.fullerton.edulester/writings/faking.html):

    Photojournalism, photography that accompanies stories intended for newspaper and magazine readers, has a long and cherished tradition of truthfulness. The faking of photographs, either through stage direction by the photographer or through darkroom manipulation, unfortunately, also has a long tradition. As a result, Pulitzer Prize-winning images, photographs that have moved people to action, and pictures that have been hailed as beautiful humanistic documents filled with hope and joy, have been questioned. Consequently, their impact has been diminished by charges of photographic faking. Such accusations are usually easily proven unsubstantiated and are the exception rather than the rule for photojournalism images. However, computer technology puts photographic faking on a new level of concern as images can be digitized and manipulated without the slightest indication of such trickery.
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246. Columbia University journalism professor Sreenath Sreenivasan has compiled a page of doctored photos: [http://sree.net/teaching/photoethics.html](http://sree.net/teaching/photoethics.html).


253. Some people who comment on my blog have said they choose to use phony email addresses so that spammers can’t scrape their email addresses off their postings. This is a valid concern. Spammers are always looking for new email addresses and regularly spider forums and blogs for email addresses. Forum and blogging software is improving, however, and it’ll soon be more difficult for a spammer’s software to effectively scrape email addresses off comment postings.

254. Ward Cunningham goes far beyond simply defining trolls. He offers distinctions and good advice on what to do about them: [http://c2.com/cgi/wiki/TrollDefinition](http://c2.com/cgi/wiki/TrollDefinition).


257. Boston Online: [http://www.boston-online.com](http://www.boston-online.com).


259. For example, as another commenter observed in the “Wicked Good” discussion of New Media Strategies, the firm worked with the Burger King fast-food chain to get the word out about a potentially harmful toy being given to small children: “NMS’ innovative one-on-one corporate communications strategy instantly reached millions of concerned parents and earned Burger King praise from both customers and the Consumer Products Safety Commission.”


261. In 2002, an article in *The Guardian* attributed the Lane quote to Glenn Reynolds, who posted this funny but relevant item on his blog: “While I do say ‘fact check your ass’ from time to time, it’s Ken Layne who coined the term. This article from *The Guardian* gives the impression that the term is
uniquely mine, which it isn’t—either by origination or by frequency of use. Hey, I just ‘fact-checked the ass’ of an article over the phrase ‘fact-checking your ass.’ I think that should get me the recursive metablogging medal of the day. Or at least a good seed in the recursive metablogging tournament.”

262. For more on the Kaycee Nicole case, see the “Kaycee Nicole (Swenson) FAQ”: http://www.rootnode.org/article.php?sid=26.


264. In 1998, *The New York Times*’ public site was hacked, and the front page changed, but the changes were blatantly the work of people who were making an anti-*Times* point, not trying to pull off another, more serious kind of stunt.

CHAPTER 10, HERE COME THE JUDGES (AND LAWYERS)


266. Meeks told me: “There was NO requirement on me to show him anything I was going to publish prior to publishing it. That was a no brainer to accept in the settlement, as any story I would write about him he would know of well before 42 hours because I’d be calling him to ask him questions.” In addition, the agreement lasted 18 months, and in any event Meeks didn’t write about the company again.

267. Blogger and law professor Glenn Reynolds says: “To be libelous, a statement must be (1) a statement of fact, not opinion; (2) false; and (3) such as to materially injure someone’s reputation.” The standard is higher for public figures, who have to show that the writer had reckless disregard for whether the statement was true.


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282. For other examples of antilinking threats, visit the Chilling Effects Clearinghouse web site. You’ll also find some unintentionally hilarious “linking policies” by corporate sites.
283. The EFF archived this and related cases: http://www.eff.org/IP/Video/MPAA_DVD_cases/.

CHAPTER 11, THE EMPIRES STRIKE BACK

288. Europe’s data privacy laws are much stricter. Asia is relatively lax.
291. See Siva Vaidhyanathan’s blog: http://www.nyu.edu/classes/siva/. His 2004 book, The Anarchist in the Library: How the Clash Between Freedom and Control is Hacking the Real World and Crashing the System (Basic Books), is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand how the forces of central control are creating such havoc with creativity, innovation, and even freedom.
294. Ed Felten, a Princeton University computer science professor, was threatened with legal action if he gave a talk about how easy it would be to break open an experimental music industry file format. See http://www.cs.princeton.edu/sip/sdmi/.

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298. The music industry’s difficulties are not due to MP3 file sharing, contrary to the propaganda. It’s due at least as much to a reduction in the number of releases and the overall lower quality of music being promoted today, as well as incredibly high prices. Moreover, a deeply researched study (http://www.unc.edu/~cigar/papers/FilesSharing_March2004.pdf) by professors at Harvard Business School and the University of North Carolina concluded that file sharing has no obvious impact on sales—and that it may actually help promote the music.


301. Patricia Schroeder, a former member of Congress who went on to head the publishing industry’s main lobbying organization, famously told The Washington Post in 2001 (http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A36584-2001Feb7), “We have a very serious issue with librarians.” I’ve shown this quote to people on many occasions, and the universal response has been sheer disbelief at Schroeder’s statement.

302. Congress is moving closer to outlawing peer-to-peer outright, and the entertainment industry keeps suing everyone in sight. In one case, a record company sued a Silicon Valley investor in Napster, alleging contributory infringement; that case has yet to go to trial.


304. And indeed, Apple has taken things away. In late April 2004, it released an iTunes “update” that, when installed, removed functionality from the software while adding new features. I fully expect that Apple will continue to do this.


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308. See InfoWorld’s coverage: http://www.infoworld.com/article/04/02/02/HNchinacensor_1.html. It’s more acceptable to use the Napster defense if you’re a big company, apparently.


310. Throughout this section, I’ve used the word “content” in the broadest sense—that which is created by anyone, not just the entertainment industry. Indeed, it’s crucial to recognize that the content users create is more important than what Hollywood creates, especially as we contemplate the architecture of future networks. See Andrew Odlyzko’s paper, “Content is Not King,” for more on this: http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue6_2/odlyzko/#o9.


313. The interstates are an intriguing mirror image of what’s required with data. In the 1950s, America’s state and local highways were well-developed. What we needed, and what corporate America couldn’t provide, was a system of long-distance roads. Today, the reverse is true: the long-distance data highways, the “backbone” networks, exist in abundance. It’s the local roads we need, right up to our homes. Big telecom carriers say they’ll provide these connections only if we allow them to control the content that flows on those lines. Imagine if we’d given the interstates to corporations that could decide what kinds of vehicular traffic could use them.


317. To get a fuller understanding of Reed’s “open spectrum” thinking, start with this essay: http://www.reed.com/Papers/openspec.html.

CHAPTER 12, MAKING OUR OWN NEWS

318. A growing body of work is now available under Creative Commons licenses. See http://creativecommons.org for more details.

EPILOGUE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS


Microsoft Word was both useful and infuriating. The Mac version seems to have a severe bug that caused me and my editor no end of trouble. If there was a serious alternative, I’d use it. I note this because I posted a blog comment about the problems I was having, and related what Microsoft’s technical support people had told me. (Amazingly, they advised against saving the files in Microsoft’s own format.) My blog posting generated an email from one of the programmers at Microsoft who works on the Mac applications. He asked for samples of the corrupted files and said he’d try to figure out what was wrong. I sent the files but didn’t hear back from him. Nonetheless, his query was another example of how the new world of information works: he, at least, was paying attention to what was going on in the online world, because it affected his product. I give Microsoft an A for this, even if I give its software a C-minus for its flaws.