

Brij Singh's Random Musings

Innovate Or Die Talking About Innovation



DECEMBER 2004

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Factcheck for investors

In India the financial investment market is still fraught with insider trading and general company malpractices. Unlike US there werent many sites or information outlets where you can go and fact-check the companies. Now Indians too have an option (specially NRIs who most of the time have no clue about the Dalal street). [Watchoutinvestors.com](#) site provides lot of fact check services for the investors.

Their objective: -

Arms investors with a self-defense tool to protect themselves from entities and, wherever available persons associated with such entities, who have been indicted by a regulator for an economic default and/or for non-compliance of laws/guidelines and/or who are no longer in the specified activity.

They should add RSS support and community forum as well. Transparency and trust expedites transactions. Good initiative.

December 04, 2004 in [Current Affairs](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Blog buzz

Blog buzz is in full swing. Microsoft announced their publishing service called [MSN Spaces](#). I took a quick test drive and found the features basic and complete for lot of bloggers out there.

Entry of Microsoft in this space is a big deal. It confirms blogging as another means of communication tool along with email and chat. Next logical step is to see its inclusion in the enterprise application context. It plays naturally into the CRM and Knowledge management domains. You will see lot of software companies announcing "RSS Support" and "Journaling" capability in their softwares very soon. I doubt enterprise space will run with the word blog in their usage. It has to be more serious sounding for people to accept (it may sound crazy but I have seen execs cringing at the sound of shopping cart, they prefer orders !)

Though blog word made it to the Webster. [Official definition](#) -

Web site that contains an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks provided by the writer

Emphasis on hyperlinks is key.

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Along came flickr

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Add me to your TypePad People list

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Robert Axelrod:
eVOLUTION OF
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Robert Axelrod: The
Complexity of
Cooperation



Solly Angel: The Tale of
the Scale: An Odyssey of
Invention

Found this via HBS Book
review, according to the
author - "Either things go
according to plan, or
there is a story"



Philip Bobbitt: The Shield
of Achilles: War, Peace
and the Course of History

Why [this](#) maybe the best consumer oriented web application of the year ?
They nailed many things right and became first social software where I took
just couple of days to go from trial to a paid member. If you have a family
spread all over the place the way I do (and the way they hate other photo
sharing tools) then this is a one gift you want to give to your family.

Where they scored -

Interface matters, community user interface is hard to design and you have to
be damn lucky to get it right
Playing to people's desire, they get the human factor right.
Magical mix of thin client and rich client features
Technology is playing second fiddle and shows up in few places as a pleasant
surprise (EXIF support is cool)

Great job Steve and team. Thanks to this tool I now see my family spending
more quality time on the internet and that too *with the family*.

As with any good software, you get the rush of ideas about what more you
can do with it. I am sure Steve and his team must be getting lot of
suggestions but here is my short list -

- more fine-grained access control, as the notion of family is very broad. I
dont want few pictures to be seen by the kids of the family but adults can
see. Its not just the Hawaii vacation we are talking but the important product
visuals, blueprints and so and so forth.

- ability to see who has viewed and how many times. Current feature gives
number of views but doesnt tell the view count per contact

- Templates for photo-essay, photo-journalism, kids projects, family gift
shopping brainstorming

Check what folks are doing with this:

*Cyprian Loman writes of [Flickr as an educational tool](#). Imagine
students working together to upload, catalog and discuss images
associated with a project. Flickr allows teachers to easily share
publicly or privately images that can be used to connect to
classroom learning and interaction.*

This and other applications will prove [web2.0](#) to be a more interesting time.

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Making a splash

This should rank as the year's most creative piece. Though press is
increasingly becoming an easy target to fall for these marketing tricks.

What's next ? company selling its reputation on Ebay ? People bartering their
trust currency ?

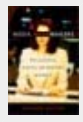
Q. Why does a company need you? Can't they do this on their



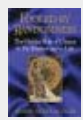
Ed Regis: Info Mesa



Paul Krugman: The Great Unraveling: Losing Our Way in the New Century



Benjamin Radford: Media Mythmakers: How Journalists, Activists, and Advertisers Mislead Us Continuing on the Chomsky's warning on identifying manufacturing of consent.



Nassim Nicholas Taleb: Fooled by Randomness: The Hidden Role of Chance in the Markets and in Life Just finished reading. Highly recommended



Robert Rubin: In an Uncertain World: Tough Choices from Wall Street to Washington



Virginia Postrel: The Substance of Style: How the Rise of Aesthetic Value Is Remaking Commerce, Culture, and Consciousness Big believer in the importance of aesthetics. It would be fun to read further on this topic.

own?

A. Well, that could be said about marketing people or PR professionals, designers or programmers, or anything. It's about what kind of skills you have internally, what kind of drive and expertise you have internally. And with something as new as blogging, it's really easy to get things wrong. Having somebody teach you for a period of time is something a lot of companies are seeing a lot of value in.

If you're looking for a job, why not post your availability on Monster.com? Why EBay?

A. Because I like to make a splash. You put your resume on Monster and the response might be that five people view it. You start an EBay auction and tell some friends and put out a press release, and it gets attention.

Kudos to [Jeremy](#) for adding to the blog-bandwagon.

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The Poppy-Seed Bagel Theorem

On why mathematics is will always cool:

Recently, [Hardin and Saff](#) analyzed a method for generating large numbers of points that are spread with near uniformity over practically any surface of any dimension. Their effort is described in the cover article of the November issue of Notices of the American Mathematical Society.

The procedure has a surprising number of applications. Among other things, it comes in handy when trying to digitize curved surfaces for computer graphics and animations with greater efficiency, in placing the elements of a sonar net on the ocean bottom in the best locations to detect the presence of submarines, and in testing radar systems in aircraft to ensure uniform coverage.

Their theorems also help explain a variety of natural phenomena. They describe some well known patterns such as that of spores on spherical pollen grains and the way electrons distribute themselves on the surface of a sphere.

They also promise to provide new insights into the nature of more complex patterns such as the surface structures of some viruses and the locations of cracks in crystalline materials. "It's a nice mix of mathematical theory, computation and physics," says Hardin.

December 01, 2004 in [Science](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

[Via [Rediff](#)]

Why are tech employees returning to their home base? In June this year, a study conducted by global IT research firm Forrester Research called "Understanding the IT services vendors' offshore approaches" alerted the industry to the reverse exodus. It said that "while the US-based vendors in India have been luring qualified staff away from their India employers," many are returning to Indian outfits to "engage in more meaningful work and to have opportunities for advancement."

Yeah the lure of working with the C-level staff. Normalization of expectations is on the march here and MNC is a deprecated term. With all companies looking as much global, it will be a challenge to provide equal opportunities for advancement in all locations.

December 01, 2004 | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Sinister tone

[Via [SiliconIndia](#)]

We should rise above political calculations for sake of Gujarat's future. We should be concerned about tomorrow's Gujarat. We should be worried about development of Gujarat, rather than about political gains

That's what you hear when you call some cellphones in the state of Gujarat in India. In the voice of infamous politician [Modi](#). This is a chilling reminder that the technology is just an enabler of good and evil things.

November 30, 2004 in [Emerging Technologies](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Grand-daddy on leadership

[Forbes interview](#) of Peter Drucker on leadership.

How To Lead a 21st Century Organization

Don't travel so much. Organize your travel. It is important that you see people and that you are seen by people maybe once or twice a year. Otherwise, don't travel. Make them come to see you. Use technology--it is cheaper than traveling. I don't know anybody who can work while traveling. Do you? The second thing to say is make sure that your subsidiaries and foreign offices take up the responsibility to keep you informed. So, ask them twice a year, "What activities do you need to report to me?" Also ask them, "What about my activity and my plans do you need to know from *me*?" The second question is just as important.

New oxygen

Its all about [broadband](#). If you have it then you are in, otherwise you are barely gasping. Future competitive advantage and business models will come from places where broadband is pervasive and available at favorable price points and accessible options.

If Internet on dial-up was fun, just wait what it can do on the broadband. We are just starting.

Social Customer Manifesto

Another meme about to acquire its Newtonian characteristics - Social Customer Manifesto (on the lines of Cluetrain Manifesto).

Based on the similar thought processing we started [SocialCRM](#) project.

Written by Christopher Carfi, (CEO of Cerado) here is the [manifesto](#) :

I want to have a say.

I don't want to do business with idiots.

I want to know when something is wrong, and what you're going to do to fix it.

I want to help shape things that I'll find useful.

I want to connect with others who are working on similar problems.

I don't want to be called by another salesperson. Ever. (Unless they have something useful. Then I want it yesterday.)

I want to buy things on my schedule, not yours. I don't care if it's the end of your quarter.

I want to know your selling process.

I want to tell you when you're screwing up. Conversely, I'm happy to tell you the things that you are doing well. I may even tell you what your competitors are doing.

I want to do business with companies that act in a transparent and ethical manner.

I want to know what's next. We're in partnership...where should we go?

This is just the beginning, as I mentioned in the [previous](#) post. We need factcheck.org-equivalent to level the playing field in enterprise software and technology world in general.

Some of the co-creation points were wonderfully explained by CK Prahalad in his [book](#).