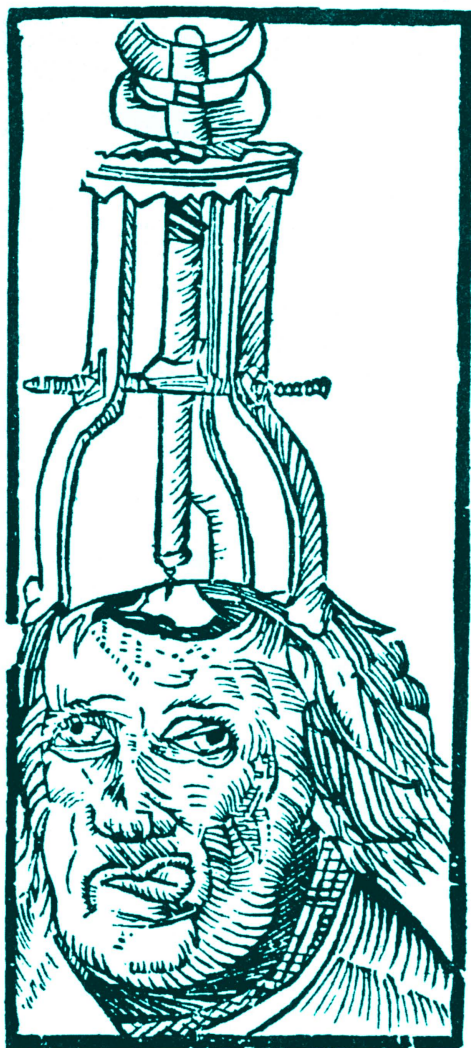
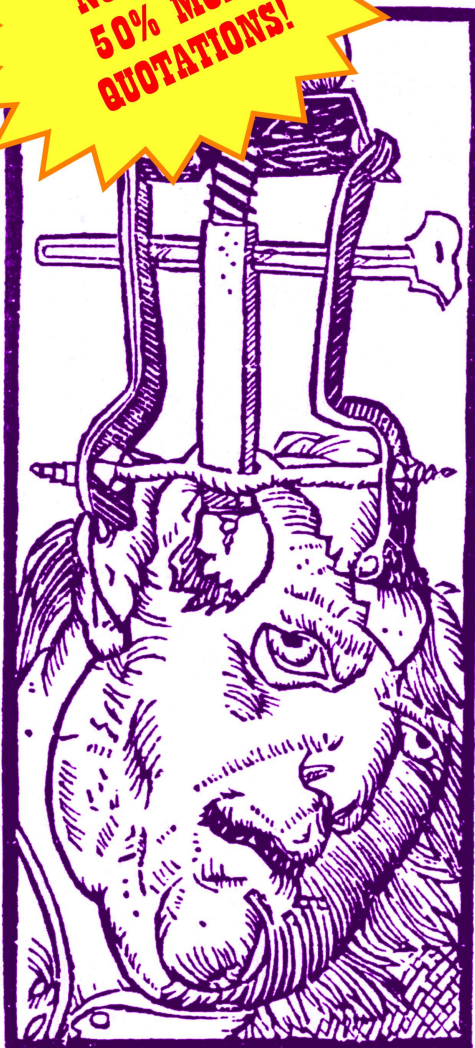


Cerebral Seepage

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May 2008
Issue 3

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A Word from **THE ALMIGHTY GURU**

"Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known." — Carl Sagan

That's right ladies and gentlemen, I've made it to issue number three! If this magazine can be compared to the modern dating world you readers should now feel obligated to put out. I'll supply the condoms; just don't expect me to buy you dinner first.

I've been learning a lot from publishing my own magazine. For one, I've learned that nobody spends money on over-priced, self-published magazines. Two, even if they're free, hardly anybody actually reads self-published magazines. Three, regardless of whether or not anyone buys or reads them, the writer/designer/publisher still really loves creating self-published magazines. Four, anyone who would love creating a self-published magazine with no reader base belongs in a crazy house with the rest of the loons.

This issue contains several follow-ups from my last issue, including part deux of Dating for Dorks, as well as another article on critical thinking, and of course, everyone's favorite, Ask A Guru. I kind of went a bit quote happy in this issue, but you'll get over it.

Since I keep getting bugged about how my pictures look terrible, I've decided to continue publishing awful pictures of myself until people start to think that the "ugly" me is actually good looking. This will, no doubt, take awhile, but I'm willing to make that

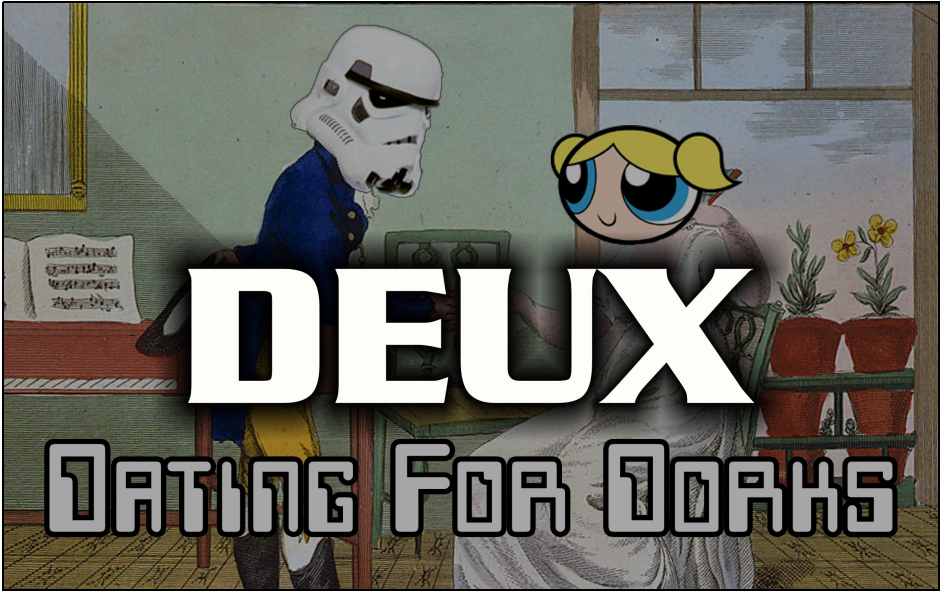
sacrifice. This picture was taken the moment I awoke this morning, on the day of this magazine's deadline.



Once again, if you want to buy a copy of this magazine, head on over to www.thealmightyguru.com/Publications and you'll find this and the previous issues available for purchase. I'm not gonna starve if you don't buy a copy, but I'm not going to get rich either. When you consider all of the starving children in Africa, I think we can both agree that I should be rich.

So, why are you still wasting your time on this introduction when you could be expanding your mind with the rest of the magazine? Go on, get!





Leela: Bender! Romance isn't about money!

Bender: Oh, so it's just coincidence that Zoidberg here is desperately poor and miserably lonely? Please!

Leela: For your information, it's because he's hideous!

Dr. Zoidberg: Awww. — Futurama

In the last issue I talked about one of the biggest problems facing geeks in the dating arena: their inability to bathe. Well, this issue I decided to pay more attention to the silent killer, self-confidence. Unfortunately, there is not much I can do to help you with this one. Nerds and geeks usually don't have the best people skills because we're too busy grinding to get that epic mount in *World of Warcraft*, or memorizing the Fischer Endgame strategy to impress everyone in the chess club. Such a debilitating amount of introversion keeps us from learning even the most basic of social skills.

It's important to know that good hygiene and nice clothes are a shortcut to confidence. If you think that you look good, then you can also assume that other people think you look good, and

it's a lot easier to talk to someone when they're commenting on how fabulous you look. However, that can only take you so far. If you've spent most of your life looking like a scrub, then suddenly dressing all GQ won't win you any bonus points with those who still remember how you looked yesterday (not to mention the fact that you'll probably feel very uncomfortable dressing in such a completely different style). Also, it doesn't matter how great others think you look; if you have some deep-rooted hatred of your appearance, then simply brushing your hair isn't going to change anything.

True self-confidence takes a long time to figure out. I can't tell you exactly how to gain self-confidence, but I can tell you that you will never have self-confidence if you don't work at it. It

may sound odd to read about self-confidence as something you have to work at, but it's true. Nobody is born with self-confidence. It comes from experience, from victories, and more importantly, from failures. It's almost like having spent most of your life role-playing a fighter, and then trying to play a paladin. You won't fully understand how to use that 17 charisma score until you've practiced it for awhile.

One of the best ways to do this is by forcing yourself to do all the things that make you anxious and nervous. Does talking to the opposite sex make you sweat more than Aquaman on Tatooine? Well, then, start putting yourself in positions where you *have* to talk to the opposite sex. As long as you keep trying to get a date, and as long as you keep talking to the people that make you nervous, you will slowly become more self-confident and more comfortable with yourself.

I used to get extremely nervous when I knew I'd have to introduce myself to strangers, especially if they were female. In order to force myself to become comfortable with this, I bought a dozen roses, wrapped them individually, took them to the mall, and then began introducing myself to women I'd never met before and giving them a rose. It was extremely nerve-racking at first, but it became easier as time went on. Sure, I still get nervous when meeting strangers, but not half as much as I used to.

Another thing that will drain your self-confidence the way a dwarf drains a tankard of ale is that feeling of poor endowment. The sex-appeal of our society favors women with larger breasts and men with larger penises. It's childish and illogical, but then so is our

society. I'd be lying if I told you your chances of getting a date don't change depending on your size, but I can truthfully tell you that they won't affect your love life.

When it comes to penis size, men are a lot more concerned about it than women. Men worship their penises. They name them, talk to them, dress them up in funny hats... but women don't really care about them. Sure, they'll be concerned if it's covered in mucus and looks like Cthulhu, but that's about it. When it comes to sex and their man, women usually only care if he can bring them to orgasm, and as you sex-perts out there know, it usually takes more than just a penis to do that.

There has never been a conclusive study about the average size of a man's penis. Sure, there is plenty of stuff on the Internet about it, but I'd hope by now you've learned not to trust everything you read. Just as long as your penis is long enough to reach a woman's vagina, you should be all set.

As far as breast size is concerned, how many men do you think would actually consider not dating a woman with a small chest? Sure, there are a few out there, and they all have the same name: asshole. So, maybe you're not going to be as popular as the chick with three boobs from *Total Recall* (her real name is Lycia Naff), but men will still find you attractive, and you'll still enjoy your life.

As for altering your physical appearance, it's certainly possible, but every method is dangerous. Enhancement pills and pumps won't make your penis any longer. Sure, you can get a penis transplant, but that involves finding a donor and then having your own hacked off (ouch!). Some birth

control pills have a side effect of increasing your breast size, but they also have other side effects on your health. Breast implants obviously work, but they don't look or feel natural, and they also come with plenty of their own risks. Even if your cup size has more A's than your report card, and even if your penis could more accurately be measured in centimeters, their size really won't affect your life as much as you think. It's best to learn to deal with your body the way it is and not be ashamed of it. This is true for being overweight and underweight as well.

There are too many other factors that will affect your self-confidence to

cover in this article. Just remember to have the serenity to accept the things that you cannot change, to have the courage to change the things that you can, and have this wisdom to remember that you're way-smarter than most people and in ten years from now, when you're living in a mansion and their mowing your law, you'll have the power to crush them with a mere thought like the feeble insects that they are! Bwa ha ha!



ASK A GURU

"I don't know that atheists should be regarded as citizens, nor should they be regarded as patriotic. This is one nation under God." — George H. W. Bush

Q: Is Pepsi really trying to remove the words "Under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance?

A: If we had a nickel for every time someone asked if an evil corporation was trying to demoralize the world... we'd have one nickel. Including this question.

First of all, never trust a forwarded email. This question doesn't even apply to Pepsi since it was Dr. Pepper that created the offending ad campaign and

Dr. Pepper is owned by Cadbury Schweppes, not PepsiCo.

It's true that during the United States' overly-patriotic phase, after 9/11/2001, Dr. Pepper (along with every other company in America) printed a special box for their product. It was red, white, and blue and covered with stars and a giant Statue of Liberty (real subtle). It's also true that the slogan they adopted for the new boxes read "One Nation... Indivisible." This was a nightmare for Dr. Pepper's public

relations department, because the bulk of the religious community (i.e. most of the country) claimed that they were trying to remove the words "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance.

This is kind of cute really. People seem to think that just because three words can be found in the Pledge of Allegiance that they must be related. You wouldn't assume that if someone said, "liberty... for all," that they were trying to do away with the word "justice", would you? Well, maybe if you're a retard.



Anyway, Dr. Pepper went on record stating the obvious: that they were not trying to remove "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance. They simply chose those particular words because they were "...designed to reflect our pride in this country's determination to stand together as one." However, this did little to quench the blood-thirst of ignorant religious zealots.

Not that any of this really matters. The Pledge of Allegiance was originally published as an advertising ploy so the owners of a children's magazine could make more money by selling flags. That's quite a humble and sacred beginning, isn't it? How utterly American that one of our most repeated

and trusted slogans is right on par with, "Just do it!™" and, "Have it your way.®"

Even if you don't mind reciting an advertising jingle every morning on cue, what does the Pledge of Allegiance have to do with God anyway? Francis Bellamy, the author of the Pledge, published it in 1892 without any references to God. It wasn't until 1954 that the Roman Catholic Knights of Columbus finally convinced our government to add the phrase. President Dwight Eisenhower signed the act which read, "From this day forward, the millions of our school children will daily proclaim in every city and town, every village and rural schoolhouse, the dedication of our Nation and our people to the Almighty." As we all know, nothing screams "freedom" like altering a dead man's words to help indoctrinate the politics of our nation with religious propaganda.

So, to answer your question, Dr. Pepper, or Pepsi, or any other accused corporation is not trying to remove "under God" from the Pledge—and even if they were, all they would be doing is changing the Pledge closer to the way Francis Bellamy originally intended. And you know what this means, don't you? It means that Francis Bellamy is trying to remove the words "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance! That commie bastard!

Please don't think that the gurus are un-American. The truth of the matter is that we're actually all very patriotic. We eat our freedom fries with sauerkraut and wiener schnitzel just like every other American. Sieg Heil!



"That's the problem with nature. Something's always stinging you or oozing mucus on you. Let's go watch TV." — Calvin and Hobbes

I know some people who insist on living natural. They eat herbs instead of vitamins, they only drink raw milk, and they won't heat anything up with a microwave. They claim that all of those practices are unnatural, so they refuse to do any of them. I don't have the heart to tell them that, despite their best efforts to become natural, they have failed. Their herbs are the product of years of selective agriculture, their bacteria infested milk still comes from cows bred for dairy production, and their electric oven still produces electromagnetic radiation.

In fact, many people have the same stupid idea of living natural. They attribute being natural to eating only vegan or raw foods, or wearing only crappy handmade clothing from rough fibers, or not shaving or taking showers —especially the not taking showers part. Mocking these people is so easy that it could be a full-time job.

What is natural? How does one judge what is natural or not? Perhaps natural means acting like an animal. Well, then, that means we won't have wars, credit card debt, or landfills—that sounds good. But it also means that we should start murdering our bosses for supremacy like wolves. We should also kill anyone that enters the territory we peed on the way a lion would (sounds

like politics, doesn't it?). It should also be perfectly acceptable to invade someone's family, murder the father and children, and then add the mother to your harem like chickens do. Okay, maybe we shouldn't act like animals in that regard.

Perhaps natural means not using anything that is refined. So then we shouldn't use polyester clothing, bleached flour, or soft drinks. That seems reasonable. Of course, we'll also have to stop using cancer treatments that actually work (sorry, honey and garlic can't cure cancer). We'd have to stop drinking clean tap water and eating fortified bread. We should also stop using flame-retardant clothing for firemen and bulletproof material for police officers.

Of course, many of these things wouldn't be needed in a natural environment where there is no technology. We wouldn't have guns, so our policemen wouldn't need bullet-proof vests. Since the ability to harness fire is solely a human ability, we'd have to give that up, so why bother with fireproof clothing? Over half of our crops would be lost to parasites, but it wouldn't matter anyway because we wouldn't be enriching them to get proper nutrition. But who cares about proper nutrition when the majority of

our children will die before they become teenagers since they weren't vaccinated from diseases?

You can see the slippery slope of living natural. No matter how much you try to act natural, there is always more you can do to limit yourself and become more primal, but how far would you go? If you really want to be natural, then stop obeying laws created by the government. Stop brushing your teeth, shaving, and using the toilet. Speaking of which, toilet paper is unnatural as well; you should be using your hand or tongue. Even fossil fuels, which are natural, have to be refined before they can be used for electricity. However, animals don't use electricity, so you can't have TV, radio, clocks, computers, air conditioning, telephones, or even light bulbs. Animals don't use fire either, so you can't heat your house or even light a candle in the dark. No fuel means no more cars. Hybrid and electric vehicles use unnatural batteries and even hydrogen-powered vehicles use an unnatural means of getting their hydrogen. You can't even ride a bike if you're natural because bikes are made from metal, vulcanized rubber, refined oil, and plastic, all of which are unnatural. What about houses? They all contain plastics, metals, glass, polymers, cement, and fiberglass, none of which is natural. Even your ugly hippie hemp ponchos are probably machine made. Was the cloth made on a loom? Was the thread spun on a wheel? It doesn't even matter because the idea of clothing in general is unnatural. We should all be naked, which means freezing to death in the winter, or having everyone move to the equator.

Even if you're somehow able to live just like an animal, the rules that dictate

living natural change depending on which animal you use as a reference. Chimpanzees are smart enough to use rocks and sticks as crude tools, but chickens are not. Does that mean the chimp is unnatural because it doesn't live like a chicken? Dolphins are smart enough to attack and kill sharks, but fish are not. Would fish consider dolphins to be unnatural? Once again, the slope continues on down. Should we lower our expectations to the very bottom? Should we base our idea of natural on amoebas? Turning your back on technology and submitting to the ways of a less intelligent species doesn't make you natural, it makes you stupid. When was the last time you saw a chimp refusing to use a stick as a tool because he felt it was unnatural? It doesn't happen, because anything an animal does is natural.

The real problem stems from the fact that people are excluding their own behavior from the natural realm. Many of us do this because we have this crazy notion that we're somehow different from nature, somehow special. That notion is, of course, very wrong since humans are most certainly animals. We're apes, as every piece of physical evidence indicates. We may have bigger brains, but all that means is that we're really smart apes. So, when you get down to it, if anything an animal does is natural, and humans are animals, then everything humans do is natural. All of our bizarre habits, all of our hopes and dreams, and yes, even everything we make is natural. From the creation of the atomic clock to the atomic bomb, from the paper clip to the ammunition clip; it's all natural.



It Stinks!

Rather than constantly review all of my favorite movies and games and such, I decided that this issue would contain stuff that I really despise. Stuff that churns my stomach and makes me consider dooming the entire human race into extinction just because we are capable of creating such filth. Researching these products actually made my eyes bleed for awhile, and I would rather give a tongue bath to a putrid bum than have to ever experience these again.

"How friggin dare anyone out there make fun of Britney after all she has been through.... Leave Britney Alone!" – Chris Crocker



Whenever I think of Britney Spears' "...Baby One More Time", I think of clean, wholesome, artistic American music. It's a symbol of freedom, a symbol of teenage rebellion, a symbol of... Oh, I can't take any more bullshit. The song is about greed, and not even American greed.

"...Baby One More Time" was written and produced by Martin Sandberg, Dag Volle, and Rami Yacoub. They sound like clean-cut, American musicians who are only interested in expressing themselves, don't they? No, no they do not. They're a group of

Swedes who wrote the bulk of American pop music from the late nineties to mid-2000s. Along with Spears, they also composed and produced music for the Backstreet Boys and N*Sync (two rough and macho groups of manly men), as well as Kelly Clarkston, Enrique Iglesias, Nick Carter, Shayne Ward, Celine Dion, and several other "artists" that you should be ashamed to listen to.

Since most teenyboppers couldn't possibly care less about the integrity and artistic merit of the music they listen to, this pathetic, vile song became a sensation, receiving an obscene amount of airplay and going double platinum in the US alone. Wherever I went in the late '90s, I had to hear that idiotic lyric, "Hit me baby one more time," ad nauseum, ad infinitum.

It didn't take long, but something snapped in me and to this day I want to take the lyric at face value. I really want to hit her. I mean I really, really want to

hit her. Sometimes I think about how I would do it. Perhaps with a crowbar, right upside the mouth. I imagine she won't do much singing with a shattered jaw and fourteen missing teeth. But then, sometimes I'm feeling more romantic and I feel the desire to hit her with my bare hands. You know, maybe feel her nose cave in underneath one of my knuckles. I wouldn't even mind a few broken fingers if it meant being able to hear her cheekbone snap. But then I start to think about the myriad of ways to inflict egregious bodily harm on her. My steel-toed boots into her kidneys, a baseball bat to the ribs, spiked brass knuckles to the eyes, or maybe take a page from cartoon violence and drop a piano on her. I think my favorite way of hitting her—and I even ask Santa each

Christmas for this—would be to stand her up in front of a brick wall with broken glass and rusty nails baked into the mortar, and maybe a little razor wire with poison on the blades. Then, I would drive an eighteen-wheeler with a spiked bumper and a full load of lead ore for optimal momentum, one hundred miles per hour directly into her, pinning her body between the wall and the truck. The resounding crash would be heard miles away, and the death of Britney would be hailed as one of the greatest achievements of the millennium.

Uh, I seem to have gone off on a bit of a tangent. Suffice to say, “...Baby One More Time” is crap.

~

“Talk to the hand.” — Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines



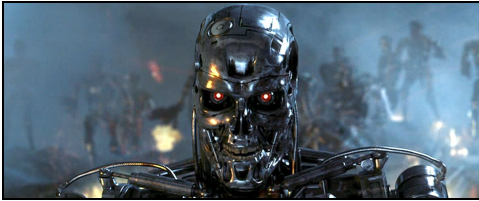
That quote pretty much sums up the creativity in this movie, which is a real shame too because the Terminator series was such an innovative science fiction story. It used the time-tested conflict of man versus machine and took it to the next level by adding a action-packed physical element to the deep philosophical side. *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*, or as I prefer to call it,

Terminator 3: Excitement Takes a Holiday, totally eliminates any and all philosophical elements so instead you're stuck watching a two-hour special effect where stuff gets blowed-up real good like.

I should mention that this review will contain several spoilers, but considering how bad this movie is, you're probably not going to care. Actually, you should be thanking me for saving you the price of a rental. You're welcome.

**TERMINATOR 3
RISE OF THE MACHINES**

From all the explosions, I first thought T3 was directed by Michael Bay, but it turns out it was instead directed by the extremely famous Jonathan Mostow. You remember him, he also directed everyone's favorite movie, *Beverly Hills Body snatchers*, and is slated to direct the upcoming movie about the most popular superhero ever: no, not Superman or Batman, but Namor the Sub-Mariner! Swell.



Despite receiving a writer's credit, James Cameron (creator of the first two Terminators) had nothing to do with T3, and I don't blame him. Even Linda Hamilton, who played the most important character in the films, Sarah Connor, was left out. Instead, they simply mention that she died. Of cancer. Cancer! WTF? The toughest, most militant, hardcore heroine in sci-fi history dies of cancer! Did the writers really expect the fans to swallow such bullshit?

Speaking of writers, T3 went for the bottom of the barrel in that department as well. The screenplay came from Michael Ferris and John D. Brancato. This duo also wrote screenplays for such exceptional movies as *Catwoman*, *Bloodfist II*, and *The Net 2.0*. Rather than coming up with new ideas, T3 merely rehashes all the old puns from the first two movies, but they're really not that funny the third time around. The terminators are constantly spouting off such memorable one-liners as, "Get

out," "I'll drive," and, "I like your car." They're uninspired and completely illogical coming from machines which should be too efficient to waste time talking.

It really ruined the film to treat the terminators like people. In the first movie Arnold Schwarzenegger was a ruthless, efficient killing machine. In the second movie he became more human, but it was only after prolonged exposure to human contact. T3's terminators didn't even seem the slightest bit like machines. SkyNet may be self-aware, but the terminators are supposed to be nothing more than computers with legs. So then, why on earth does the T-101 try and "fight" against the T-X's nano-corruption? A computer runs its program, that's *all* it does. It doesn't try to "fight" against it.



Taking away the machine aspects of the terminators also took away all of the fear they project. The female terminator was a joke. I guess that's what you get when you pick an ex-model (Kristanna Loken) to play your terminator. Even though she had the ability to shape-shift like the T-1000 (something that added fear and paranoia to the second film), the ability only plays a minor role. Instead of being sneaky, she was overbearing. Instead of being scary, she was sultry. I didn't want to run from her, I wanted to plow her. That would have been fine if I wanted to see a porno, but I wanted Terminator. Of

course, the writing is so bad that at times it almost seems like a porno.

Rather than good writing, the movie has violence. Lots and lots of flagrant violence with innocent people being blown away in wanton killing sprees. The body count rivals Rambo, except only “good guys” get killed which only serves to add to the shock factor. However, a shock factor is useless without a moral, which is another thing the movie lacks.



The enjoyment of the movie also takes a major hit from the lack of believability. Granted, since it's a sci-fi movie about killer robots from the future, how believable can you get? Yet, I still get annoyed when I see a bullet make a car explode or knock someone back fifty feet. Doesn't Hollywood watch *Mythbusters*? I'm also annoyed when a human can sustain serious,

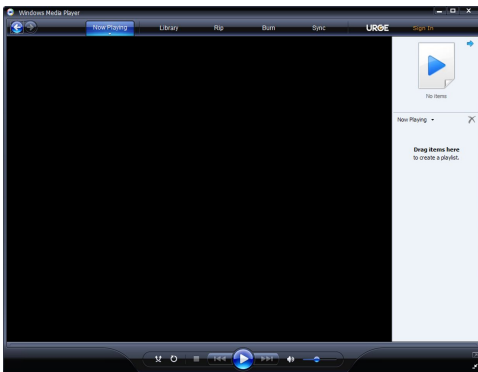
nearly life threatening injuries, only to be in the peak of health in the next scene. As for physics, the sequence where the T-X gets attracted to the electromagnet is equally as lame because her clothes (which are metal) don't seem to be affected by it, nor does any the metal that John and Kate (Nick Stahl and Claire Danes) are carrying. Other failures include the cars being steered using the car's on-board computer, which is impossible, several chronological mistakes, and a *huge* list of continuity errors.

As the movie finishes up, you're left feeling depressed. All of the hope from the first two movies is completely eradicated in T3 and I really don't have anything good to say about it. The world would be a better place if it had never been made.

To add insult to injury, Terminator 4 is currently in pre-production. It's going to have a totally new cast, the same awful writers as T3, and an even less experienced director. How sad.

~

“Ugh! What the hell is this crap?” — Beavis and Butthead



Well, let's see... DRM support: check. Ripping to the crappy WMA format: check. Inability to play 90% of common media formats: check. Processor intensive, useless flashy interface: check. Well, that about wraps it up, *Windows Media Player* has every single feature that you *don't* want in a media player. Congratulations Microsoft, you've once again taken a bowel movement and called it a product.

It's actually quite disappointing because the early versions of *Windows Media Player* were pretty good. They could play most known formats and they were compact and fast. However, each new version of the program became bigger, slower, and failed to support any of the new formats that were becoming popular on the Internet. Microsoft is now on version 11, so you can pretty much figure out how terrible the product has become.

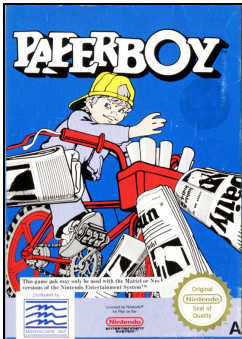
Let's talk format support. *Windows Media Player* does *not* support Au, Cinepak, DivX, Flash, FORscene, Matroska, Musepack, Ogg, QuickTime, Real, Sorenson, x264, XviD, and many, many others. If you were to make a list of every digital media format, you will find that *Windows Media Player* can play about 1% of them, and that's with

rounding up. I still haven't figured out how Microsoft can justify calling it a "media player" when it doesn't actually play media. I have to give it credit though, *Windows Media Player* supports Microsoft's patented Window Media formats really well. Yes sir, props for that. It's just a shame that Microsoft's patented formats consistently rank near the worst in benchmark tests.

Since I'd rather shoot up with bleach than use *Window Media Player*, I always delete it from every computer I own. However, Microsoft is like a awkward date that just can't take a hint and tries to reinstall itself after every new version and on every service pack release. I'm sorry, Microsoft, I think we should be "just friends".

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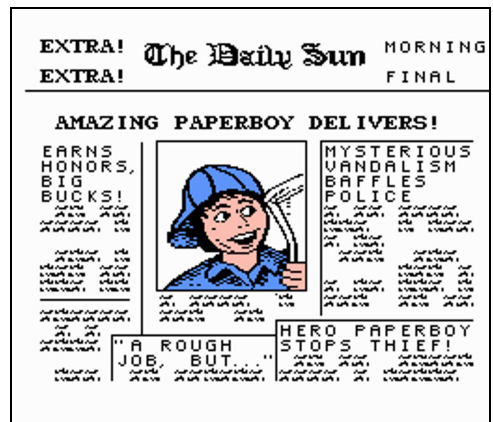
"We are going to sue videogame manufacturers, platform manufacturers, and retailers like Wal-Mart, Circuit City, and Amazon..."
— Jack Thompson

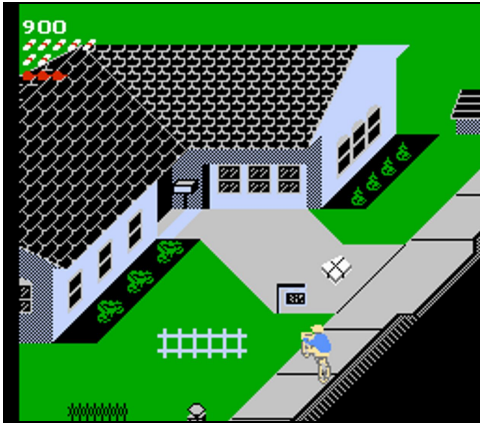


You know, I had a paper route when I was a boy, and I can assure you that being a paperboy is nothing at all like the game. Sure, I've had to pedal past my share of tornadoes and crazy old women in curlers, but I was never once attacked by a sentient lawn jockey or the incarnation of Death.

Maybe *Paperboy* isn't meant to be a simulator, and I'll even admit that all the bizarre crap in the game gives it character (for a short while). But it is

impossible for me to say, with a clean conscience, that *Paperboy* is a good game. I don't care how many fond memories you have, the game is a pain in the ass.



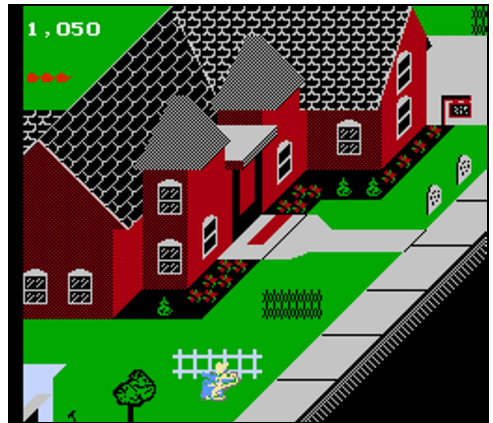


I'm not a BMX expert, but I think that any amateur cyclist can handle the basics. I mean, even a six-year-old with a club foot can stop, make ninety-degree turns, and ride up an inclined curb. Yet, somehow, our little retarded paperboy can do none of these things. He also has the balance of an acrophobic tightrope walker because any minor bump in the road, any tiny little sewer grate, any strong gust of wind and he falls to the ground like a paraplegic on roller skates. It's very disheartening. The fact that you're given about zero seconds to react to some deadly hazard doesn't really make the game any easier.

Don't believe me? Go ahead and play it for awhile. And not one of the good versions like the arcade or Amiga, go right to the crapfest that is the NES port. After you've thrown down the controller in disgust and screamed your thousandth obscenity at paperboy's inability to turn more than a half of a degree, you'll probably feel the same way I do about this trash.

However, if you're the type of person who stayed with this game crash after crash and actually became good at it, I salute you. Not like a respectful military salute, but more like a, your life

is so pathetic that you had nothing better to do than waste your life becoming good at a terrible videogame, salute.



You can see exactly what I mean with this near-perfect run through the game:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-t0gzolWt_c

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"Charity sees the need, not the cause." — German Proverb

American Idol Gives Back—last seen on April 8th, 2008—is the title of a television charity where several bleeding-heart rock stars, celebrities, and *American Idol* hopefuls sing their lungs out to help raise money for needy children. For 2008, they raised over \$60 million that was disbursed among several charities. Most of the money came from large corporations who were only giving away the money because they could write it off on their taxes and because *American Idol* would plaster their name up on the television every six seconds. I'm not going to repeat the company names here because they're a bunch of self-absorbed hypocrites, and also because they aren't paying me squat!

You may be wondering how I can justify insulting companies that are

giving so much to charity, but I can assure you, they are *not* charitable.

What attributes do you think are associated with the word "charity"? Giving, selflessness, humility, sacrifice? Those all seem to fit, because they embody the very act of charity. If a family is in need of food and someone gives it to them, that's charity. You can be charitable in many different forms, from training people to become self-reliant to merely cutting them a check. Charity boils down to the idea of giving.

Advertising, however, is done almost for a completely opposite reason. In advertising, money is spent, not on a product, but to make people *want* a product. The hope is that the money and work invested into the product will create a demand that offsets the cost of advertising and, thus, you will net

profit. Advertising is a very broad term. Companies use it in the form of commercials and billboards; people use it in the form of sexy clothes and hairstyles. In the end, advertising boils down to getting.

Even though they have different ends, both charity and advertising have very similar means. Many people fail to see the connection, and some may argue that statement, but if you break them down you can see it. Both charity and advertising require money or work and both are an attempt to create an improvement. The only real difference is that while charity is to help others, advertising is to help one's self.

It's a common event in our society for the upper class to hold charity events just like *American Idol*. Basically, a bunch of "haves" get together to raise money for the "have-nots". This is usually endorsed by several celebrities and business owners, and put on TV for all to see. Sure, we call them charity events, but in reality they have much more in common with advertising promotions.

Now granted, money changes hands, and the people who need money are usually getting it. And while that does make it charity by definition, I feel that it's much closer to advertising. You may ask, how does getting a bunch of people together to raise money for the poor count as advertising? The answer is that the people giving away money aren't just there to help the less fortunate, they're there to be seen. They want others to see how they're giving away their precious hard-earned money to the poor and destitute. They are advertising themselves so that others will think of them as good people—true

humanitarians. They are not giving money to the poor; they are investing in an advertising campaign that they hope will earn them or their company more business than what they gave away. Unlike regular advertising, they even get to feel self-righteous from doing what, in their eyes, is a good deed even though their whole motive was self gain.

Am I being unfair? Are all the people who attend charity dinners or concerts or dances hypocrites? Well, let me ask you this: was it really necessary to waste a bunch of money on a stage and television airtime to get people to give away their money? Are the expensive dinners, wine, and cigars needed to mail a check? Shouldn't these people derive the same amount of satisfaction from sending the money anonymously? Do they need the plaque or the statue built to honor them? These people want to be seen. They want others to look up to them as heroes who saved the weak.

If a person helps build a house for the poor and doesn't ask anything in return, even recognition for the work, they're showing charity. If a person wants flashbulbs and television cameras on them as they hand the check over to the lame, they're advertising.

I'm not trying to say there is anything wrong with advertising. It is a necessary business endeavor and people who are skilled in it should be proud. I *am* saying that people should be aware of those who would disguise advertising as charity and see their hypocrisy for what it is.

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BALLOON-PHOBIA

"What is success? It is a toy balloon among children armed with pins." — Gene Fowler

You're afraid of balloons? Seriously? What are you, a sissy?

Yes. I'm afraid of balloons. Being around them causes deep anxiety, seeing a child playing with a balloon causes more, and don't get me started on people making the horrible rubbing sound on the latex.

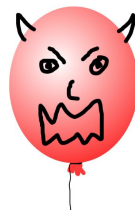
Now, I'm sure there's a more technical name for it, but I suffer from balloon-phobia. I know that balloons can't hurt me. I know that they're just colorful pieces of latex-fun that make little kids squeal with glee. In fact, when I was a little kid I loved them. But somewhere along the course of becoming an adult, balloons began to horrify me. I can't put an exact age on when the phobia started, but it was sometime during my late teens when balloons stopped being fun toys and became the cursed devils of public embarrassment that they are. Even though I may seem like a freak, I'm not alone with this fear. Just do a Web search for "balloon phobia" and you'll see countless other people admitting to the same problem.

It isn't really balloons themselves that I'm afraid of. A bag of balloons doesn't bother me at all, and I'm usually fine around those metallic mylar balloons as well. The real fear comes from the anticipation of the possibility that a balloon might pop. Thusly, seeing kids playing with them roughly, or seeing them scrape across the ceiling

causes me to panic. Probably the most intense fear comes from being around balloons while they're being inflated. I get so bad at times that I will cover my ears and leave the room in a hurry. Even if I'm the one blowing the balloon up, there is still a fear of them popping, so I always stop long before the balloon is full just to ensure that it stays intact.

This is obviously embarrassing since I take a bit of pride in not being afraid of things that can kill me like venomous snakes or el chupacabra. But how can you act macho when a child's toy makes you run for cover? Just like any phobia, I really don't appreciate people making fun of it, and I also hate it when people use it against me by rubbing balloons in my face or pretending to pop them.

You would think that I would want to do everything in my power to rid myself of this foolish fear, but to some extent I enjoy having it. I don't like being mocked by my friends, but some people understand my fear and console me. And those people who console me tend to be sweet, caring, and most importantly, female.



I'm going to
eat your soul!

Anecdotal Evidence

"You may fill in the details from your own experience. As unoriginal as any other tale, as unique as any other life." — American Gods

Come sit on Uncle Pedro's lap and let me tell you a story of adventure and mystery. When I was a strapping young lad I once went to dinner with my mother and step-father. As far as I was concerned it was a ritzy place because my root beer came in a glass bottle (obviously a four-star dining locale). Well, we began to eat and my mother made a startling discovery in her salad. There was a ladybug in it. It was quite dead, of course, but it didn't do much for her appetite. She called our server over and showed her. The woman apologized and immediately took the plate away and brought a fresh one free of charge. Our server then told us a story about how she once found a live frog in a bag of salad. We were all fascinated about how the little amphibian lived through the washing and chopping process. The rest of the dinner was fine, and we had an interesting story to tell people later.

And that's the story. Or should I say, that's *my* story. If you ask my mother about our trip to the restaurant she'll explain to you about how I found a frog in my salad and I was very quiet about it. I nudged my mother and told her about it and then she called the server over to get rid of it. My mother will swear up and down that she remembers it clearly, and that her story is exactly how it happened. Of course, I also remember that day clearly, and can assure you that my story is right.

The problem is obvious. We have

contradicting stories, so both of us can't be right. While I personally feel that my story is more believable and that my mother's age is proof that she's suffering from dementia, it doesn't change the fact that neither of our stories can be proven one way or the other.

This is an example of the problems that occur when you believe in anecdotes and testimonial evidence. In fact, investigators will often cite that eyewitness accounts are usually the *worst* way to gather evidence, because each person's testimony will undoubtedly contrast with the others. Aside from the obvious fact that people often lie, there are three main reasons why you shouldn't trust testimonial evidence.

The first reason comes from retrospective falsification, which is the act of changing a story after each retelling. Everybody does this, whether they want to or not. Sometimes it's done intentionally to make a dull story more interesting. Chances are that if you tell a story about the time you pulled an average-sized fish out of the water on an overcast day nobody will care. So maybe the next time you tell it, you indulge a little by saying the fish was pretty big, and put up a good fight. You can easily justify this change, because without quoting exact measurements, a "big" fish is all relative. Then, the next time you tell the story it was disturbingly quiet with a possible storm

approaching when you wrestled the large fish from the water. Again, it's more exaggeration than lying. But eventually, this fish tale turns into the epic account where you fought for hours to muscle this behemoth out of the torrid waters in the gales of a hurricane. Nobody really likes to admit doing this, but we all know we do it. It doesn't just have to be tall tales either, because oftentimes people will make the story different unconsciously just because people respond better to more exciting tales. Also, each time the story is retold to someone else, and they, in turn, tell another person, a little bit of the original story is lost and something new is gained. Without a permanent recorded account of the original story, it quickly becomes impossible to tell what actually happened.

The second reason is something called confabulation. This occurs when people fill in forgotten gaps of their story with the memories from something similar. Again, this can be done consciously or unconsciously, but the result is the same. An eyewitness to a bank robbery might swear up and down that the robber had on blue shoes, but the security photos shows that he was wearing white shoes. Only then does the witness realize that, when the robbery took place, they were admiring the blue shoes of the person in front of them and that's why they confused the blue shoes with the robber. Because of the way in which your brain stores memories, confabulation is very common in memories that were made during times of stress, and memories that have faded over time. It's not that uncommon to tell someone one of your early childhood memories, only to have them point out that your memory is actually a

television show.

The third reason anecdotes can't be trusted is because people can be given false memories. It may sound like science fiction, but it is possible to implant false memories into someone's mind relatively easily, and psychologists have shown that with a little prodding, suggestion, and leading a person's train of thought they can make someone truly believe that they took part in something that never happened. False memories are sometimes known to be the case in criminal trials involving sexual abuse. Counselors sometimes unintentionally convince children that they were assaulted by their relatives, even when there is no reason to believe it and no evidence to prove it.

What it all comes down to is that sometimes you trick your brain and sometimes your brain tricks you, but it doesn't matter which, because the result is that you're telling a story about something that never happened. You shouldn't trust someone else's stories, they shouldn't trust yours, and to some extent, you shouldn't even trust your own.

You may be asking yourself, if I can't trust my own memory, what can I trust? Luckily, there is always evidence left behind for everything that happens, and evidence is not subject to the failures of human memory. Sure, evidence can be falsified, but when someone makes false evidence, they also make evidence to prove that it was falsified. If you want to know what really happened, study the evidence, not the testimonies of people.



how 2 make a grrl luv u <3

"Woman is the most fiendish instrument of torture ever devised to bedevil the days of man." – O Brother, Where Art Thou

Have you ever seen one of those poorly written, poorly conceived lists on the Internet that explain how to be a good boyfriend? They look like the silly writings of a lovesick thirteen-year-old girl who wants to tell guys how she wants to be treated. The ideas appear to be based on whatever teen movie is popular that hour. If you have yet to see one, all you need to do is get yourself an email address and wait eight minutes.

From the surface, these lists appear to be simple suggestions for guys on what they can do to treat their girlfriend like a princess. I'm here to tell you the truth; these lists are diabolical traps! Most men, by the time they reach their late teens, have already discovered the truth about women. They're evil cold-blooded emotional vampires and their demonic lust can never be sated. However, some of you wide-eyed, stupidly optimistic boys might see these lists and think they're harmless, cute, and maybe even a little romantic. But heed my warning—women are clever creatures. They have the ability to turn everything that you do, no matter what your intent, into horrible gestures of greed and cruelty.

This particular list was sent to me in the form of a mass-forwarded email from a ~~succubus~~ girl. To the untrained eye it appears innocuous, but I've filled in the replies that you can expect if you're foolish enough to follow these suggestions.

1. Hug her from behind.

"Why do you always hug me from behind? Why don't you ever hug me from the front? Are you thinking of somebody else's face? Are you trying to tell me I'm ugly? Why do you think I'm ugly?"

2. Grab her hand when you walk next to each other.

"Oh that's original. Did you pick that up in grade school? You're so juvenile. Why don't you ever wrap your arms around me?"

3. Wrap your arms around her.

"Can't you ever give me some free space? Why do you always have to be such a needy freak all the time?"

4. Cuddle with her.

"Give me a break! I come here because I wanted a real man to ravage me and all you want to do is cuddle? What are you, a fag or something?"

5. Don't force her to do anything!

"We're going to watch the movie I want to watch. We're going to see my friends. You're not watching TV, you're going to mow the lawn. Don't you dare tell me what to do, you spineless weakling!"

6. Write little notes.

"Oh how romantic, a Post-it with chicken scratch. Where are the furs and diamonds? You're so cheap."

7. Compliment her honestly.

"I look pretty today? So what does that mean, I didn't look pretty yesterday? Why don't you just say the truth and tell me that you think I'm a fat old hag?"

8. When you hug her, hold her in your arms as long as possible.

"Seriously, do you plan on hugging me for the next two years or something? You've already hugged me from behind, held my hand, wrapped your arms around me, and cuddled with me. Are you some kind of stalker?"

9. Be super sweet to her.

"Awww, you are soooo kwoot and I wub you soooo much! That's so Saccharine I think I'm going to vomit on you."

10. Don't ditch her for your friends, invite her to come and hang out with "the guys".

"Oh yeah, I'm sure I'd love to watch your piggish friends sit around and brachiate over football while doing keg-stands and drooling over the celebrities they don't have a chance with. We're spending the day with my mother and that's final."

11. Comfort her when she cries.

"How can you possibly expect to comfort me when you're the reason I'm crying in the first place, you heartless jerk!"

12. Love her with all your heart.

"I just belittled you in public, cheated on you with your best friend, kicked you in the balls, and you still love me with all your heart? Grow a backbone, you weakling!"

13. Pick her up when you flirt with her (she'll demand to be put down, but she loves it).

"What kind of chauvinistic ass are you? Put me down! I don't want to be picked up! Although I will want to be picked up in the future, I'm not going to tell you when; however, if you don't pick me up then I'll be pissed at you so you better have working ESP!"

14. Be a gentleman and hold the door for her.

"You know women are oppressed throughout the world and it's sexist cretins like you that keep us held back under the guise of acting like gentlemen. Women should be treated like equals. Nay, worshiped like the goddesses they are!"

15. Don't let your friends talk trash about her, it'll get back 2 her!

"You stuck up for me from something negative your friend said about me? Well, you're never going to see that person ever again because you shouldn't be friends with anyone who has anything bad to say about me. Why don't you make friends with one of my many male friends who are richer and more attractive than you?"

As you can see, adhering to lists like this is folly. No matter what you do, women will shoot you down and grind your bones into bread for their Satanic communions. The best thing you can do with women is just pick one at random and hope she's not as cruel and evil as the rest.



Enlightenment

"The people who are regarded as moral luminaries are those who forego ordinary pleasures themselves and find compensation in interfering with the pleasures of others." — Bertrand Russell

Terrorism is a faith-based initiative.

All generalizations are false.

"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." — Arthur C. Clarke

"The things you own, they end up owning you."
— Fight Club

When an alarm clock begins ringing,
why do we say it "goes off"?

"Christmas is a time when people of all religions come together to worship Jesus Christ." — The Simpsons

"The opposite of a correct statement is a false statement. But the opposite of a profound truth may well be another profound truth." — Niels Bohr

"Censorship is telling a man he can't have a steak just because a baby can't chew it." — Mark Twain

So, this baby seal walks into a club.

"For a successful technology, reality must take precedence over public relations, for nature cannot be fooled." — Richard Feynman

Are paraplegics allowed to do stand-up comedy?

Never moon a werewolf.



"Yummy, yummy, yummy, I got love in my tummy..." — Ohio Express

Freezer pops (originally thought to have been created by the powerful being of pure love and light; the Flying Spaghetti Monster) were discovered to have been made by humans after all. Who could have thought that a cheap plastic tube filled with over-dyed, under-flavored sugar water could become one of the greatest inventions ever? Me, that's who.

The flavors bear absolutely no resemblance to their intended fruit, and yet, they're more addictive than crack. Mmm, tastes like blue. I wish I could hook myself up to an I.V. of that precious syrup, but then I wouldn't have the great frozen crunch that we all know and love.

These cylindrical treasures go by many names, including Fla-Vor-Ice™,

Pop Ice™, Icy Pops™, Tas-Tee-Ice™, etc. Regardless of the name, they all have something in common: They're frozen, they taste like candy, they look beautiful, and they mutilate your teeth.

Because these things cost about a billionth of a cent to make, they can be sold super cheap. I like to buy about 1000 each summer and fill my entire freezer with them. That way, they're sure to last all four months. Those ten and twenty count boxes are for sissies, so try to find the big two-hundred and fifty count boxes for maximum savings.

Note: As a public service, I'd like to mention that if you take the freezer pops out of their cardboard box they'll freeze faster, allowing you to enjoy their colorful kaleidoscope of pure perfection much sooner.

WEB SITES

you should know about by now

"During my service in the United States Congress, I took the initiative in creating the Internet." — Al Gore

I remember telling someone early this year to just check Wikipedia for some info, and they actually asked, "What's Wikipedia?" How is it possible that, at a time in history when we have more computers than toilets [citation needed], there can be someone who doesn't know about Wikipedia? Well, in order to make sure you're not left behind, here are some sites on the World Wide Webiverse that, if you don't already know about, you had better become well acquainted with.

wikipedia.org - The biggest and best encyclopedia to ever exist. It is constantly updated by people all over the world—all day, every day.

imdb.com - The Internet Movie Database contains a list of every movie and television show ever filmed, along with pages for everyone involved in their creation.

woot.com - Each night, at midnight, a new tech product is placed for sale at an incredibly affordable price, but the offer only lasts for the day.

urbandictionary.com - Entries on all the latest street slang contributed and maintained by actual street thugs (i.e., your children).

myspace.com - One of the largest social networking sites on the interwebs. Post your profile, meet new people, and stalk that hot girl from high school all over again!

snopes.com - A comprehensive researched list of all of the urban legends you've ever heard of and all that bullshit that gets forwarded to your inbox.

archive.org - Visit the Wayback Machine and see what the Internet looked like as far back as 1996, with all the blinking text and tiled backgrounds you can take.

icanhascheezburger.com - Cute kitties with even cuter captions. Make your own kitty cartoon and view thousands of others.



www.thealmightyguru.com

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