

■ ANDREW RUPPEL, Feature Editor, McIntire School of Commerce, University of Virginia

Nothing but Net

Andrew Ruppel, Feature Editor

Having made it up court to the next millenium without tripping over the paint of the Y2K half-court line, we can now look back at one of the astonishing moves of the prior period: the growth of the Internet. Its buzz continues to ring in our ears. More sites, more pages, more portals, more plug-ins, more start-ups, more IPOs, more millionaires, more hits, certainly more hype. Is the Internet the greatest since Michael Jordan? Is it more like *March Madness* or is it just a round of *Horse*? Here are some books to help you follow the game.

here. Better to try www.whatis.com to stay on top of the latest technical jargon. The Business section listed sites dealing with the conduct of business rather than about business. Better to go the Finance & Investing section; 40 sites are listed, ranging from www.bigcharts.com to www.ipo.com. As to the oddball sites, consider www.findagrave.com; it will locate where famous, and infamous, people are buried.



Internet Cool Guide

by Rula Rizek, ed.

Teneues Publ., 1999,
199 pages.

www.teneues.com

GIVEN THE PROLIFERATION OF WEBSITES and the increase in pages per site, one needs to pause from time to

time to get an overview of what's available—particularly outside one's usual interest areas. This compact book will help. It lists, indexes, and rates over 1,000 sites, grouping them into 33 categories ranging from arts to law to women's concerns, with an emphasis on contemporary life and culture. Each site gets about a seven-line description and, if merited in the eyes of the editor, an icon each for outstanding content, originality, and cool design. Assembled by a German publisher, the book's site listings are all English-language based. Front-end material includes a helpful discussion of search engines and strategies and other general info for the novice—but within which the experienced user finds a tidbit. For example, this writer learned that "https" in the URL meant that the site was using encryption. A two-page glossary of jargon is also provided — nothing new



The Greatest Inventions of the Past 2,000 Years

by John Brockman, ed.

Simon & Schuster,
2000, 192 pages.

www.SimonSays.com
www.edge.org

EDITOR AND LITERARY AGENT BROCKMAN used the Internet to collect nominations for the greatest inventions of the last two millennia from a variety of serious thinkers whom Brockman maintains contact with through his web site, www.edge.org (check it out). This was no *People*-magazine-like poll. And the replies were far from mundane answers like the telephone and the automobile. Would you believe 'hay?' 'classical music?' and 'free will?' Of the various contributions, Brockman selected just over 100 suggestions for publication here. Computer- and math-related ideas garnered the most mentions: about 20%. While cited in passing in several of the comments, the Internet was explicitly suggested only once—by Roger Schank, a computer scientist at Northwestern. The Internet's 15th century predecessor, the printing press, drew a considerable number of votes, as one might suspect. And there are those inventions that enabled mankind to make significant transitions in the way of living, for example, the plow, stirrup, basket, and clock. Two of the respondents said that



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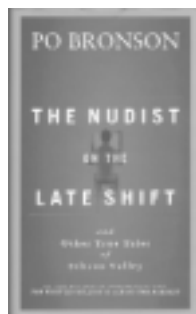
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there was nothing worth citing. But they had particular axes to grind. I side with those respondents suggesting the telescope, microscope, spectrograph, and other lens-based instruments as among the greatest inventions because they enabled mankind to gain different perspectives and viewpoints, including of itself.

Many of the *greatest inventions* suggested by Brockman's arbitrary panel are inventions of the mind rather than inventions of the hand. Indeed, if one categorizes and tabulates the suggestions, the number of mental constructs is almost half of the list. Now to be sure, all 'hard-copy' items were preceded by someone's clever thoughts. What we're distinguishing here are those inventions that in their usable form remain as products of the mind. Perhaps the most singular of these is George Lakoff's "the idea of an idea." (Lakoff is a linguistics professor at UC-Berkeley.) Brockman has recognized this distinction among the suggestions that he received and has partitioned the suggestions into *How We Live* and *How We Think*. These labels are not very useful. Far more useful would have been an alphabetic index of the suggestions to add to the alphabetic

index of contributors that is provided. And he could have done more to juxtapose identical and contrasting thoughts. Since Brockman ran this exercise in quasi-chat room fashion, some respondents tried to one-up each other in the sophistication of their suggestions, often using the opportunity to advance their own specialties. Nevertheless, this is a very thought-provoking little book and worthy of keeping handy on the shelf to remind one how clever we collectively are.



***The Nudist on the Late Shift*
by Po Bronson**

Random House, 1999,
248 pages.

www.atrandom.com
www.pobronson.com

SUBTITLED "AND OTHER
TRUE TALES OF SILICON
VALLEY," Bronson's

book vividly captures the techno-fiscal flamboyance of the people who make up the Internet industry. He divides them into seven categories, devoting a chapter to each

of the entrepreneurs, futurists, IPO-ers, salespersons, programmers (one of whom is the nudist in the title), newcomers (to the Valley), and dropouts. Like the world he writes about, Branson's descriptions at times tend to be a blur. An appendix giving the cast of characters (some of whom were described under aliases) would really have been helpful. His prior two book-length works were novels. This non-fiction piece was put together using articles that he wrote for *Wired*—a hip magazine for the Internet set.

The rate of change that he describes for the industry and for the companies and individuals in it is striking. Developing a dot.com enterprise is exhilarating. Mundane business practice has now become exciting for engineers and programmers—and certainly rewarding for some. Among the accounts, is that of an individual benefiting from a \$400 million buyout. Bronson claims to have a 'money-green filter,' which allows him to remain focused on the individuals and their stories and not to be dazzled by the dollars that some have been

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Regions

Southeast Region News

Jane H. Philbrick, Savannah State College

The Southeast DSI 2000 conference, held February 23-25th in Wilmington, NC, was a tremendous success. One of the best workshops was on Synchronous and Asynchronous Distance Learning and Web Based courses chaired by Max Burns.

The 2001 Conference will be held in Charlotte, NC, on February 21-23, 2001. The Program Chairperson is Ina Markham, markhais@jmu.edu, (540) 568-3056. Visit our website (<http://www.sedsi.org>) in the next few months for information on the special sessions being planned.

At the 2000 annual meeting, Steffy Robbins of UNC-Charlotte received the coveted Distinguished Service Award. The slate of new officers was announced at the Conference Luncheon on Friday. The new officers are:

President-elect

Drew Rosen, *University of North Carolina - Wilmington*

Program Chair

Ina Markham, *James Madison University*

Secretary

Al Harris, *Appalachian State University*

VP Finance

Susan Palocsav, *James Madison University*

VP Member Services

Vijay Kannan, *James Madison University*

VP Planning and Development

Susan Rebstock Williams, *Georgia Southern University*

VP Publications

Greg Russell, *Georgia Southern University*

VP Student Liason

Quinton Nottingham, *Virginia Institute of Technology and State University*

Council (2000-2002)

Ed Clayton, *Virginia Institute of Technology and State University*

Carl Gooding, *Georgia Southern University*

Nancy Green Hall, *Kennesaw State University*

Brooke Saladin, *Wake Forest University*

Jim Wynne, *Virginia Commonwealth University* ■

MARKETPLACE

BUTLER UNIVERSITY Assistant/Associate Faculty Position in Operations Management

College of Business Administration

"...notably different from positions at large, research-oriented institutions."

We seek a colleague who shares our belief that an individual professor can make a difference—in the life of a student and in the shape of the college. The successful candidate will share our vision that providing an excellent, portable, applied education is the central purpose of being a faculty member. We are looking for an individual with:

- primary interest in service operations management and
- secondary interest in management information systems or statistics.

Butler University's faculty is able to be and enjoy being engaged in student/teacher partnerships with a broad range of students from entering freshmen through experienced MBAs. The person filling this position should emphasize practicable over technical concepts appropriate to non-major courses in operations management at the undergraduate and MBA levels. He or she also should be able to discuss strategic issues of information systems in contemporary business, especially with MBA students. Although our mission is education based, we believe that a successful and effective educator is intellectually active—requiring faculty members to pursue a research agenda, which will result in significant basic, applied, or pedagogical contributions. Butler University presents a setting where faculty members are expected to engage

in cross-functional research and intellectual growth.

The teaching load is usually nine hours per semester with research support and release time available. Salaries are competitive.

Qualifications

An applicant should have (or be near completion of) a doctorate in operations management or related field; be able to demonstrate excellent teaching (teaching evaluations among other things); and have demonstrated a scholarly track record or convincing evidence of intellectual contribution potential. Persons with little teaching experience are not encouraged to apply. Business and consulting experience, graduate level training in management information systems, and an interest in interdisciplinary approaches are all a plus.

Application review will begin immediately. The position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found. Consideration will also be given to those seeking a visiting position.

Applications and curriculum vitae may be sent to:

William Templeton, Ph.D.
Director, Undergraduate Programs
College of Business Administration
Butler University
4600 Sunset Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana
46208-3485
(317) 940-9221
e-mail: wtemplet@butler.edu

Butler University is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to cultural diversity. We encourage women and minorities to apply. ■

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able to amass. His coverage of an IPO during its so-called quiet period—a kind of press blackout on financial prospects—is intriguing. In reporting on the fusion of the thinking of the financial types, such as the venture capitalists, with that of the Internet types, such as the contract programmers, Bronson notes that they now speak and understand each other's languages. In some cases, they may not always be using English. A recent *New York Times* story reported that a demographic 'cross-over' has occurred in the Valley. Non-whites now outnumber whites in that part of California. Immigrants from the south of Asia and from south of the border are attracted to the Valley's job opportunities.

Because of the hunger of Silicon Valley firms for people, firms offer stock options to keep people *with* the firm and office-environment amenities keep them working late at night *for* the firm. The turbulence of personnel turnover in the valley creates considerable opportunities for recruiters. (Most of the headhunters, wary of the virtual-ity as opposed to the virtuousness of the situation, want cash payment, not stock options.) Too few people and too much venture-capital money shape the Valley's climate of heightened risk. One hundred and fifty years earlier, it was the Gold Rush that changed California. Now it's the rush experienced by dot.com pioneers that is changing more than just California. Bronson captures that heady excitement. ■