

hello.

Culture, Commerce, and Copyright

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First let's get a few things out of the way:

What do these things have in
common?



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They have some sacred cows associated with them.

Marriage

A perfect example of the clash between people and institutions. 40 years ago there was little debate over who “owns” marriage. Now, there is clearly a line being drawn. There are effectively two different kinds of marriage in our society today: the religious institution (along with its secular institutional counterpart) on the one hand, and the personal one - a “contract” between two individuals, that they may modify themselves as they see fit, between consenting adults. Some of us being more adult than others, of course.



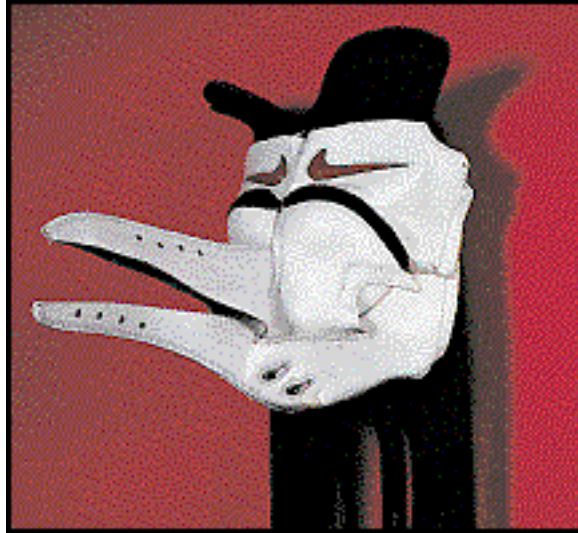
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Shoes?

Does Nike make shoes? I think they sell you the Nike experience, and give the shoes away for free.



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But by turning their brand into a cultural artifact, can they really say they “own” it any more?

Mickey

The whole framework of copyright is less and less at the service of society and culture, and more and more at the service of big business interests. It is an absolute fact that culture belongs to the people who express it. Not the companies that try to profit from it, or the institutions that try to control it. The sad fact is that our copyright law is diverging further and further from this reality. Law isn't my area of expertise or interest, so I won't comment further on that, but it seems obvious to me that extending copyright for longer and longer periods is simply wrong. With all due respect to the fab four, Yellow Submarine doesn't belong to you. I sing it to my kids at night, I hum it to myself when I'm jogging, I make sideways references to it when I'm talking politics... it belongs to me. My culture belongs to me.



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The Web

Known As... Fifi or Piff
Age... 23 years young
Place... The 518
Albany, Nu York

MY SPACE

SO FUCK YO' SPACE

Me
high, laid back, original
smartass, that nigga, scorpio,
humble, versatile, twisted,
partly animal, real, not u,
2nd to none, workaholic,
nightowl, dandrager,
lover, vengeful loyal,
that piff.

The Web isn't a series of tubes.

The Web isn't a series of tubes.

Its a shared space.

A space where people
express
themselves

A space where people
be
themselves

It's not made of web browsers, or
mash-ups, or software as a
service...

You might say...

You might say...

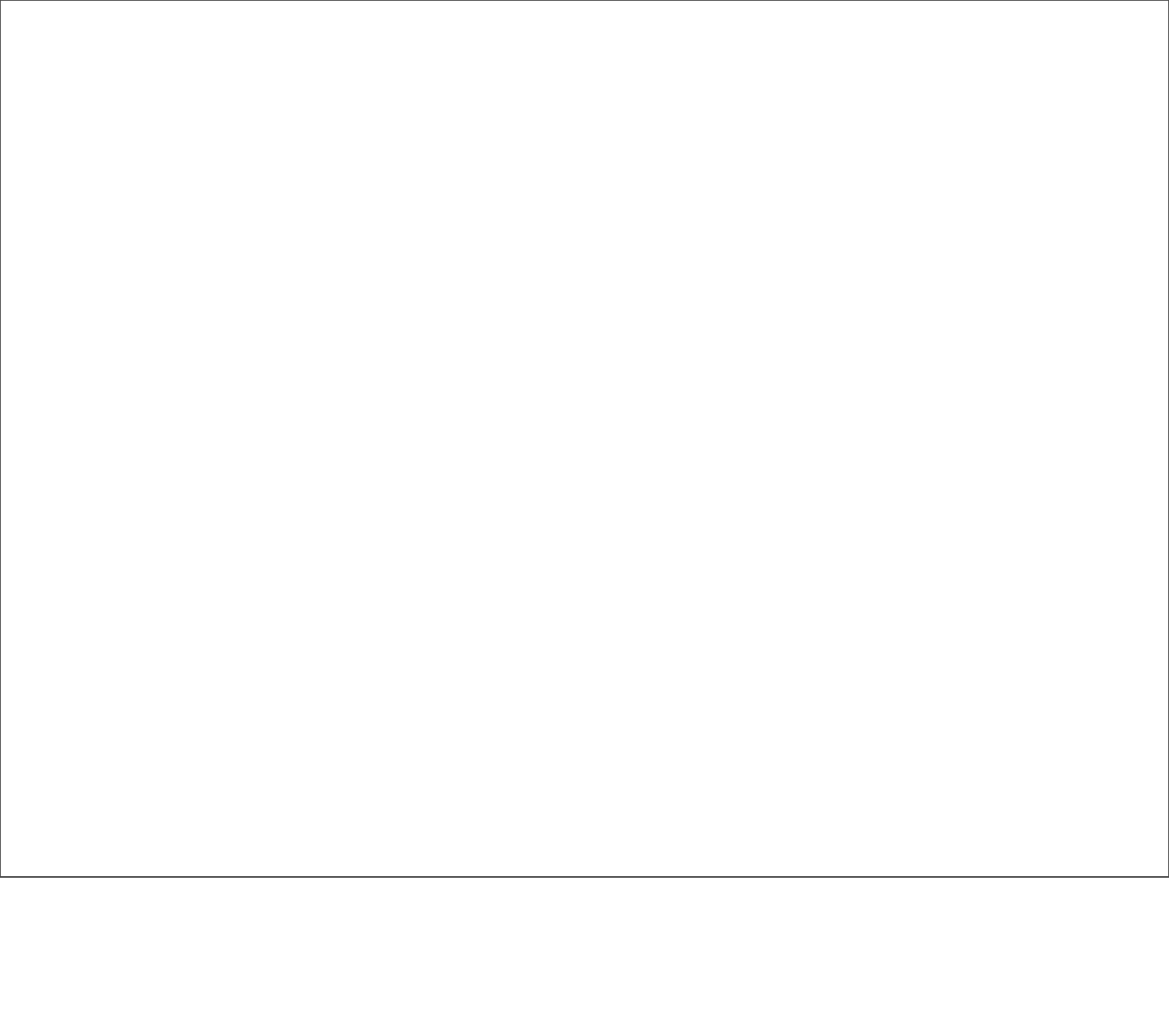


You might say...



...it's *made* of people

it's a people thing.



It's made of customers

All content is user-generated.

Whitehouse.gov =

They're all the same on the web - just resources at some URL.

Whitehouse.gov =
badgerbadgerbadger.com =

They're all the same on the web - just resources at some URL.

Whitehouse.gov =
badgerbadgerbadger.com =
nytimes.com

They're all the same on the web - just resources at some URL.

Authenticity is the new Black

Looks good on you, goes with anything, suitable for any occasion

Classic, you might say

"My Deep cleaning carpet cleaner is wonderful! Before moving out of a rented apartment I used it to clean all the carpets & it made them look brand new. ... If you're thinking of getting rid of an old looking carpet, save your money & purchase a Bissell Deep cleaning carpet cleaner instead. It will keep your carpets ALWAYS looking brand new!!"

Which do you trust?

*"The machine is awful. CHEAP, CHEAP, CHEAP!
Second Bissell steam cleaner and both were
headaches! Design flaws up the waazoo. It leaked
a whole \$10 bottle of detergent through a rubber
gasket. It got thrown across the room where it
flipped and landed on its side!"*

Which sounds more authentic?

They say "on the internet noone knows you're a dog" but nothing could be further from the truth. The authentic human voice is always immediately recognizable to us.

ihatemicrosoftxp.com,
ihatestarbucks.co,
ihatedell.com,
ihateblockbuster.com

Do these companies fully own their brands?

Can they?



User generated content
examples...



User generated content
examples...

George Master

Working at a Vocational school somewhere... not a marketer. Did not have the Apple account at some huge ad firm. Just some guy.

1

Created the infamous iPod commercial. What did Apple do? Brilliantly, they did nothing. Their lawyers went nuts, but here was a customer so passionate about the product that he made it a key part of his life for months as he laboured in his basement.

"There's some guy in his garage who's been working on a hot rod for 3 years. Andy Warhol painted soup cans, right? Guy loved soup."

Guy loved his iPod.

DNA & Suzanne Vega's *Tom's Diner*

Took Suzanne Vega's vocals and remixed it into a new song. Vega's lawyers wanted to sue, but she said "I like it." The resulting remix was much more popular than the original 1987 recording (and made Vega more money than the original recording over the same period).

"We're tired of the 20th-century model of being passive consumers of mass content. We're transitioning to a new kind of culture. More participatory, more open, more interactive where the locus of control passes."

J.D. Lasica, Darknet: Hollywood's War Against the Digital Generation.

But who's listening?

in a 5-Billion channel universe, who's listening? Does it matter? Change your frame of reference. What you want is people talking about you, not listening to you.

Culture isn't something we
consume.

in a 5-Billion channel universe, who's listening? Does it matter? Change your frame of reference. What you want is people talking about you, not listening to you.

Culture is something we do.

in a 5-Billion channel universe, who's listening? Does it matter? Change your frame of reference. What you want is people talking about you, not listening to you.

Culture is the story that a
community tells itself

These stories are about *me*

If you let it be *my* story, you lose
some control...

...but in exchange, you get to be a
part of something far more
fundamental to me

Don't butt in.

Buy them a drink

Give them a place to talk

Give them something to talk about

**Case in Point:
The TechPubs Department**

Technical writers take content and concepts that originate elsewhere in the company (like engineering), and produce product manuals.

Or, at least, they used to.

People don't buy products, they join communities.

Often, those communities know more about how your company's products *actually work* than the engineers who designed them.

A Google search for “unofficial user guide” turns up thousands of community websites, producing better manuals than you

**Just like your techpubs department,
Your customers are turning your
marketing department inside out**

become a conduit for customer participation in the process of designing and documenting products.

But remember!

It's not about you

It's about *US*



uniserve

it's a people thing.