

Nurse Logs and the Jesus Tablet

by Mark Matteson

When my wife and I were in our early twenties, we ventured to Washington State's outer coast. Nestled between the magnificent Olympic Mountains, this stretch of coast is the Hoh Rain Forest. Moderate temperatures and 14 feet of rain per year create an earthy, rich atmosphere where the odor of decomposition is at once soothing and eerie. Amidst this marvel of nature, I half expected Bilbo Baggins to jump out and exclaim, "My Precious!" As we wandered, I noticed one of nature's great miracles, the nurse log.

Trees that blow down in the Hoh disintegrate quickly and become footholds for new life. The corpses of these ancient giants become a rich and fertile bed for young saplings when seeds become trapped in the rotting crevices. The future grows out of the past.



Forty-five years ago, Marshall McLuhan told us "the medium is the message". I believe what he meant was, as important as the content is, it's the technology and those who leverage it first, fast, and effectively who will prosper. Many people believe reading is dead. Some pundits have actually written books on the topic. Moreover, newspapers and magazines are the giant trees rotting in the forest.

I have long believed in the value of reading magazines and newspapers on a daily basis. I call it Rip and Read. The first magazine was printed in 1731 and the first transatlantic television signal was sent in 1928. In the early 1950s, there were three television networks and twelve magazines. If you had a product and the means to advertise, you contacted those mediums, paid what they asked, and zoom, your product flew off the shelves. Not so now; it's a new day. The financial state of newspapers and magazines in this country and the future of publishing are hot topics in business circles.

Americans under the age of 30 expect to access any newspaper or magazine article for free. Raised to expect instant, portable, searchable, sort-able, savable content, these youngsters (my boys included) are the future of media. They just may be the saviors of the publishing industry because where attention flows, money will follow.

Consider the incredible success of YouTube; content is now in the hands of the many instead of the select few. Advertising revenue sprints to Google—\$23.6 billion last year, more than the entire magazine industry combined. Look no further than Craigslist and what it did to classified ad revenues in a few short years. Most people I know who are forty years old or younger, go straight to Craigslist and never pick up a newspaper's classified ad section. Thanks to Craigslist, I recently bought a *like new* used oak desk that fit my new office perfectly for 30 dollars, after pricing similar desks at my local office furniture store for 800 dollars. It took me all of an hour to find it. How many of you now go to Fandango instead of the Friday entertainment section to select a movie, purchase your tickets, and plan your weekend?

The only medium that has prospered since the late 1990s is the blog, one that tends to favor breadth over depth, cheap opinion over researched, in-depth reporting. Traditional publishing has been searching for ways to make a buck online. So, despite plummeting profits, why do titans like real-estate magnate Sam Zell (the *Chicago Tribune*) and Mexico's Carlos Slim (Telmex) continue to invest in a dying tree? Foresight.

Rupert Murdoch's *Wall Street Journal* is now in full-on paid mode, but most are not. Kevin Kelly, founder of *Wired* magazine, says, "Right now, digital magazines are right where cinema was when it just recorded plays." Kurt Andersen, novelist and public radio host, was quoted as saying, "Anything remotely resembling news media is going to continue to migrate online until very little or none of its produced on dead trees. But what remains to be figured out is how it's paid for, and whether this whole system of enormous newspaper and magazine staffs can be reconfigured to be sustainable in this new age."

Why would anyone pay for the content that our children download, cut, and paste for free? For the same reason millions of people pay \$15 a month for a music subscription which allows them to listen to virtually anything as often as they want. Remember Napster? We all suffer from time poverty; our time is valuable. If the price is right and the value is there, if it's fast and easy, we will pay for it. Downloaded any iTunes lately? Look how ubiquitous the Kindle is. Have you been on an airplane lately? Every third person has one.



Many media experts are betting on Apple and its messiah, Steve Jobs. Steve Jobs and God willing, the future of magazines and newspapers is secure, according to a recent article in *Fortune* magazine. They are betting on a giant iPod-looking device that browses the Web,

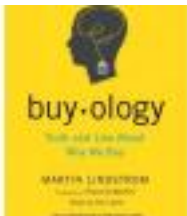
displays full page ads and video in color, and downloads killer apps that sell as fast as they can be created. Some are calling the much anticipated iPad the "Jesus Tablet". ABI Research estimates 58 million of these tablets will be sold by 2015! Will it save us all? Maybe not ALL, but perhaps the enlightened few who learn to embrace the technology.

Book publishers have been tormented and tortured by Amazon's attempt to cut them out of the financial equation. Some predict they will soon, come late March, flock to Apple and Mr. Jobs. I say, Oh Magoo, you've done it again: the iPod, the iPhone, and now the iPad! Get ready for the Jesus Tablet; it's going to change the world as we know it.

Adapt or die. The world of media and publishing is changing. If you think about, it's fair. When the giant tree blows down, seeds lodge into the rotting log and sprout. The circle of life continues. Only one thing will change very soon—everything! Maybe its time to revisit the Hoh Rain Forest for the answer to the future. Stay tuned.

Book of the Month

BUY-ology by Martin Lindstrom



While in Istanbul, Turkey, Matt Michel and I were browsing in a bookstore, looking for a book on marketing as a gift for the client who had sponsored our visit. Matt suggested *BUY-ology* by Martin Lindstrom. I don't remember why we chose another book, but I remembered this one. It has a sticky title.



A 38-year-old transplanted Aussie and Danish expatriate with spiked blonde hair and a boyish appearance, Martin Lindstrom is the Malcolm Gladwell of global marketing and a brilliant consultant. He began his research into marketing at age 12 and is now called a brand expert and futurist. His resume is impressive indeed. It includes some of the finest and most high-profile Fortune 100 companies in the world. As it turns out, he is an extraordinary writer as well. He is funny, insightful, and clever. After you read the first chapter, you will understand why the *Wall Street Journal* called his previous book, *BRAND-Sense*, one of the ten best books on marketing ever written.

My favorite story in Martin's book involves a bank:

He was sitting next to the CEO of a large eastern European bank who wondered, "How can I boost public awareness of my bank?" Lindstrom had downed a few drinks, was relaxed and a little tired. He fired off his advice, "Paint your entire bank, and everything in it, PINK!" The fact that banks and pink don't go together was why it would work. Six months later, he received an e-mail from the irate banker saying every bank, every car, every staff uniform, even his tie, was PINK—but everyone hated it. "Stick with it," Lindstrom advised, "In three months, you will notice a difference." Approximately ninety days later, the banker e-mailed Martin again. Now customers had come to associate the bank's PINK BUY-ology with the comfort and security of a childhood piggy bank. They had the highest brand awareness of any bank in the country. Moreover, they had cut their marketing costs in half!

Would you like to know why your prospects and clients buy from you? Why your brand sticks in the prospect's brain to be used later in choosing you, your service, or product over your competition? Or why sound, smell, color are more important than logos? Invest a couple of hours and read this book or download it onto your Jesus Tablet or Kindle! It's worth 100 times what you will pay for it.
