

SELLING MATHEMATICS

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Yea, I've learned some hard knocks and mean issues here in the big time of *real* commercial software that makes you more than \$10K per lifetime.

Ideas are not worth much

Anything you can get for language development is a win. Most folks end up writing a book that is more profitable. And I know famous authors who live less well than we do.

The latest model: a good crisp idea, one that gets a few dudes excited enough to use their name in conjunction with it, gains the ideaee *status points*, known by some as *dude points*. Dude points don't mean shit, except every now and then some pesky journalist will waste an evening with you pretending to understand. Enough dude points, usually gained at the cost of indentured servitude, earn you the right to profess, which means other people do your work for you -- to earn their dude points. [The wonder of this whole set-up is that dude points aren't conserved, yet they remain rare. Of course, you need a hell of a lot of dude points to understand why this is so.]

And every once and a while, dudes pick up a speaking engagement, to earn some cash that the government takes in taxes, doing whatever is the most uncomfortable traveling imaginable, to get ego strokes from a bunch of faceless murmurers who will waste an evening with you pretending to understand. [The wonder of understanding is that it takes huge amounts of time and focus, yet most folks are totally ready to convince themselves that they understand every little wiggle of a tongue, and every little electromagnetic vibration that happens to strike their alert sensory apparatus, and this understanding is thought to be instantaneous and intuitive.]

But there is more than hope for the collector of dude points: big business.

These money vortices have a lot of people running around telling their bosses that they understand how to make money, and to appear responsible (or to cover their butts) they buy dudes. Little do they know that dudes who have written languages are desperate, from their perspective, inside a culture that by structure is dedicated to maintaining the status quo (unless times are bad, in which case the big business just gets rid of the people running around trying to make money), they think the dudes know something.

Well of course the dudes do know some things, that's why they're dudes. They know that big businesses will give them big bucks if they pretend to know with confidence.

So the moral is: Use high quality technical work to impress a rich sponsor, but don't expect to use it to make money.

And there's more obvious stuff, like:

"The reason the creator of an idea gets 5% is because it takes 95% more effort from others to make money on an idea."

I get rather humbled to see 200 people supporting the code generated by one person. 40 for debugging, extension, restructuring; 30 for quality assurance, hammering on it; 20 to position it in the market; 30 for sales and distribution; 30 for product support, to help the users; 10 for strategic planning; 20 for marketing, ads, press; 20 to administer the masses.

And the Deep Trivia Question for the night is:

Why are deep mathematical ideas are given away free in text-books?

Turns out the correlation between money and deep ideas is .05 (unless someone who has money buys your idea).

Public domain ideas

The media is the hungry agent that replaces peer review. If you're doing something interesting, THEY will be on your doorstep. Let others publish your work!

The public-domain model is that academic research (serious contribution) addresses neither innovation nor progress. Rather it addresses a quite narrow concern of incremental refinement of technical details that have been abstracted from human concerns, human motivations, and human contradiction.

Peer review and respectable publication is a impoverished reward substitute, the public domain transacts *money* as reward. Money, in turn, follows human enthusiasm.

Fundamentally, academia is ultra-conservative, and has *no mechanism* to accommodate innovation. The groupies (with and without clothes) follow action, not esoteric refinement. Of course, craziness seems to come with extreme talent.

A nice reference: Fred "Mythical Man-Month" Brooks, in CHI 88, "Grasping Reality Through Illusion":

"I suggest that we as SIGCHI and as HFS define three nested classes of results - findings, observations, and rules-of-thumb. ... The appropriate criteria for quality will differ: truthfulness and rigor for findings; interestingness for observations; usefulness for rules-of-thumb; and freshness for all three."

With *broad theory*, I'm observing that findings are almost always not interesting enough to attract money or women. I differ with Brooks since I believe in relative truth, so findings are also not rigorous unless the full context is explicated.

In my second dissertation, the anonymous reviewer said "Impossible" because the context of the findings was so far from his experience (a free school) that we could not even share a reality.

Oh, at MIT they've discovered the elementary particle of truth, the *truon*. Interestingly, the anti-truon does not exist. Rigor is defined by truon quantum effects, and it is observer dependent. Remember you heard it first...

I think the system is entirely in whack, achieving its explicit objective, to maintain the illusion of absolute truth through consensus. And yes, real science is personal integrity and clarity of vision. Constructivism (remember we *are* making it all up) creates reality through perseverance. Like they said at Stanford: if you want a job, make up a field.

Why submit papers for publication? Full submission is the main technique to achieve freedom of construction. The point is to recognize that academic publication is a narrow game, just know that your playing on a small field. If you don't like the out-of-bounds marker (agree with us or re-write...), then don't play that (narrow) game.

And for self-reflection, these ideas interest me because I've constrained myself for twenty years to the small game.