

Slide 1

Hi my name is Peter Bromberg and I will be your PeCHA-ki CHA skeptic for the evening.

Since I developed this before having the pleasure of seeing the others offer their presentations, this will be, to some extent, a response to what I predicted they *might say*.

Slide 2

In the interest of full disclosure I think you should be given a fair idea of how skeptical I am. I was on Twitter a few weeks ago and mentioned that I would be playing the role of skeptic for tonight's program.

A number of friends tweeted their encouragement, but one friend, an old boss of mine who knows me well, and is not one to mince words, responded with..."with all due respect, you do not make a good skeptic. (I mean that as a complement...)

Slide 3

So maybe I'm no James Randi (who wouldn't believe his own pants were on fire without independent scientific verification.)

But I'm also not an early adopter

- I basically come to new technologies in 2 ways
 - I'm playing around with something and I find that it fills a need OR
 - I have a need and I find a technology that meets the need.

Slide 4

And that brings us to tonight's word, "So What?"

Some of my friends and colleagues, certainly no one on this esteemed panel, seem to adopt every new technology as soon as it's available, if not sooner.

Since new technologies are being launched 20 times a day, this leaves little time for such things as working, eating, sleeping, or spending time with family. (of course, depending on your family that could be a blessing or a curse)

Slide 5

So when my more techo-lusty friends get all breathless about the latest and greatest technology, I take a deep breath and ask myself (pause), "so what?"

I ask myself, Will it fill a need? Can I actually use this great new technology in some way to enhance my life. Will it help me in some way? (Is it relevant to me??)

Slide 6

Our first presenter tonight was Romina. She told us all about the many specialized search engines. available on the Web. To be perfectly honest, I generally just use google. But now I've seen the light! There are SO many other ways to find information. I think I need a specialized search engine to find the specialized search engines!

Slide 7

Who would have guessed? There are specialized search engines to help me find real estate people, medicine, news and music. There are other engines to help us find jobs, travel info, videos, government information, business data, educational materials, maps, patents, census data, information on computers, cars, and on and on.

Slide 8

I have no doubt that if time allowed Romina would have further educated us about the availability of other specialized search engines. Surely there are specialized tools for finding 3-toed sloths, left-handed monkey wrenches, and crustless bread. Isn't there a search engine to help me find radio toasters?

I'll probably continue to use Google as my search tool of first resort, but it's good to know all these specialized tools are available.

Slide 9

Next we heard from Julie, who told us about virtual reference. Librarians like it because it means they can answer your questions from home while wearing bunny slippers

New Jersey's virtual reference service, QandANJ, is popular late at night with students, reporters working on deadlines, as well as with other assorted demographics.

I have to admit, it's great to know that there's someone there to answer my questions at 2 AM.

Slide 10

I also have to admit that I'm probably a little less skeptical about Julie's presentation because I helped create and manage QandANJ. Over the past seven years I've read thousands upon thousands of customer comments. So I know how much our customers appreciate the service and how much they value the convenience of 24/7 service.

Slide 11

So what do our QandANJ customers tell us? They consistently comment that they like

- **It's a Fast Service**
- **It's Free Service**
- **Live Person** (*beats the alternative*)
- **Nice person** (*also, beats the alternative*)
- **Expertise of librarian**
- **Always Open** (*like your favorite diner*)
- **Didn't have to leave their house**

So I know this is one highly relevant service!

Slide 12

After Julie's presentation on Virtual reference we heard from Bob. Bob gave us his version of Robert Fulghum's "All I Really Need to know I learned from Kindergarten" In this instance however, all Bob ever really needed to know he learned from World of Warcraft.) One man's kindergarten is another man's battlefield I suppose.

Slide 13

Now I am not completely skeptical to the joys of video games. I played them all through my childhood. In fact, until I met my wife, I'm not sure I loved anything as much or as deeply as my Atari 2600 . If today I had the money I blew in the arcades in the 80's it would probably be enough to put a child through college. But as for what I learned from playing games?

Slide 14

I guess learned that...

- It is possible to sit 3 inches in front of the TV for 8 hours a day without burning out one's retinas.
- Playing video games all day, every day for a few years beats working.
- Getting a new game for the console is roughly as exciting to a 14 year old as learning that aliens have landed and taken over the white house.

I don't know maybe today's games are more educational...

Slide 15

After Bob shared his gaming experiences, Janie told us about the wonders of social networking. According to Janie, social networking has been around since the time of the caveman . Perhaps. But I find it hard to believe that cavepeople had the free time to log in for status updates, or do a blog post about what they had for breakfast that morning.

Slide 16

Janie told us about Twitter where you only have 144 characters to post your message.

So far as I can tell, the premises of twitter are

- There are 48 hours in a day
- There is no work to be done
- People are interested hearing about why I hate my office mates (they smell, they make funny noises, they take my stuff)
- Sharing random details of our lives makes us "friends"

Slide 17 .

Having said all that, I admit that I do have a Facebook page. And a MySpace Page. And I occasionally Twitter, as you've seen. There's a new service called FriendFeed which helps you keep track of all your friends who are addicted to these services. I recently tried it out and found that Julie was already registered. How this could fail to deepen our friendship, I don't know.

Slide 18 .

Last, but certainly not least, John spoke to us about sharing online. Ahhh, sharing... I guess if Bob learned everything he really needed to know from World of Warcraft, it seems like John actually DID learn everything he really needed to know from Kindergarten—or at least from Mr. Rogers. Indeed, It's good to share...

Slide 19 .

You know, I've never met John before tonight. But I read his blog, and check out his tumbles, and through his selective online sharing I feel like I've gotten to know him a little bit. Here's what I've learned

- He likes beer
- He has a beautiful new baby boy
- He likes beer
- He writes pretty good poetry
- He likes beer

Slide 20

I've also learned that we have a different definition of the word "fun". "Debian Style Management?" Really John? Fun?

But in the end I think John does a great job of integrating many of the tools that everyone has spoken about tonight and shown us how they can be used in a balanced way to enhance our lives.

And that ladies and gentleman, is the Word. Thank you