

Thursday, June 21, 2007

Anti-Domain Parking "Petition" an anti-free market nightmare

I think much of my initial reaction to the petition to "Stop Domain Name Parking and Cybersquatting" has already been said in my Attack of the TechnoPinkos post of a couple weeks ago. This is a typical example of leftist angst stemming from the fact that people actually earn a living and gasp generate profits from monetizing domain names.

As somebody in the domain industry (we aren't a big domain parking player and as a registrar we have exactly 0% of the domainer market, and most people know how I feel about the aftermarket and how overheated it is), there are a few issues with this "petition" that I feel duty bound to point out.

Domain Parking is not the same thing as Cybersquatting. Anybody who equates the two removes any doubt to their utter cluelessness about the entire domain industry. Cybersquatting involves registering a domain that is somebody else's trademark

Domain parking is a legitimate use for a domain. If you advocate rules or laws against domain parking then you are making rules for how other people can or can not use their domains. You are regulating content, which is indeed, one slippery slope.

Trying to outlaw domain parking and cybersquatting in the same petition is like trying to outlaw toxic waste and MacDonald's Happy Meals at the same time.

The petition calls for ICANN to "ensure that a domain names that are parked would be available for sale at a price tag that would not be considered extortion". This advocates price fixing and completely revokes domain registrants rights to their own domains. The request is outlandish. Check out wealth.net. Egad! It's parked. So I'm to understand if one of these pinkos thought they had a legitimate "claim" to this domain, under their rules ICANN would force me to sell it to them at a "reasonable" price because they don't think I'm using it? I paid an enormous sum for that name in the aftermarket. It's mine, it's parked, get over it, screw you.

Somebody else parking a domain doesn't prevent anybody from doing anything. Yes, domain names in themselves can be built into powerful brands, and many of them earn substantial income from type-in traffic and PPC, but at the end of the day, the map is not the territory. Owning a generic keyword domain doesn't bar the rest of the world concerned with that keyword from carrying on about their business. I own ravingpinkos.com, I just snagged it moments ago and now I'm monetizing it via parked.com. That doesn't prevent any of the saps who signed this petition from starting their own raving pinko website, circulate their raving pinko petitions, and try to build their raving pinko utopia. They just can't call it ravingpinkos.com.

The text of the "petition" was changed mid-stream. One of the reasons I keep using the word "petition" in quotes. After one very shrewd and well said comment on the message boards (written by Johnny B) about this initiative, they subsequently posted that they changed the text of the petition (!). Which means that the people who signed their names before the edit then had what they were petitioning arbitrarily changed.

Having said all this, anybody who knows the difference between Twisted Sister and twisted pair can tell you this "petition" is a joke.

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Nutjob Watch at 21:04

Monday, June 11, 2007

2012 Logo spells ZOIZ! Proof of a reptilian / grey alien conspiracy

It is with ever increasing bemusement I scan nutjob havens like GodlikeProductions and RumorMillNews and find the tempo of the hysteria has been palpably building lately (possibly because of the impending destruction of Earth by Planet X within the next 6 months)

When everything is a conspiracy and the shadowy cabal at the top controls all history, it comes as no surprise that the new London Olympic Games logo:

Spell's "ZION" to the gaggle of nuts in the tinfoil hats. All you have to do is "some slight rearrangement of symbols on the 2012 logo it spells out ZION!" (which is a real quote). I love that phrase "slight rearrangement". These BigConspiracy nutjobs have no problems shoehorning anything into a worldview where a bear can't crap in the woods unless a reptilian overlord in the shadows has planned it out.

Some slight rearrangement of the symbols also gets you ZZ Top, and if you don't move anything I think if it spells anything it's either ZOIN or ZOIZ or maybe ZIOZ. I think Jon Stewart nailed it when he said "it looks like a slot machine going down on an ATM".

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Nutjob Watch at 12:19

Friday, June 2, 2006

June 6 prediction nailed, another example of the long tail of blogging

About a year ago I blogged about the approaching June 6, 2006 date and owing to its MM/DD/YY date string I predicted that a lot of rubbish was going to surface in form of conspiracy theories around this date.

It looks like I was right, just a small sampling of net.kookiness brings all kinds of hyperbole from the lunatic fringes of the internet like June 6, 2006: 6 Things You Must Know, the Left Behind folks are releasing The Rapture on June 6, and even mainstream Hollywood is re-releasing The Omen on this date.

What I didn't expect was that my original blog post would become the #1 organic search result in Google for various June 6, 2006 related terms and that over the last few weeks, there have been a lot of those and they've been accelerating.

A quick look at some of the search terms people are using include:

- june 6, 2006
- june 6 2006 the end?
- end of the world june 6
- june 6, 2006 and 666
- 6th of june conspiracies
- what is going to happen on june 6 2006
- june 6 2006 end of world
- earthquake prediction june 6 2006
- significance of june 6, 2006
- world ending on june 5th
- wwiii 666
- june 6 2006 bible

and the list goes on. It's pretty interesting. I moved the blog today (wanting to get a handle on all the trackback spam I was getting on the old one, and to put it on one of my own servers), and I'm now tailing the access logs in realtime. Over the last few weeks it was getting up to a couple or few hundred visitors per day to this 1 year old blog post (the average post on my blog gets maybe 5 or 6 visits a day), and I think today it will go over the 1000 uniques mark, I expect a crescendo of activity leading up to D-Day next week (pun is very much intended).

Anyone concerned that the world may end on June 6th should bear in mind there was another subculture of net.kooks who were pretty convinced there would be an asteroid hit on May 25th, and some of these people (as I've remarked before), seem genuinely disappointed that it didn't happen. They keep their hopes up. Maybe the asteroid will hit week.

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Nutjob Watch at 13:46

Wednesday, August 3, 2005

On the internet, a plane crash is never just a plane crash.

Plane crashes are in themselves so rare and so spectacular that when they occur we are both horrified and fascinated. Hence the eyewitness reports from yesterday's Air France crash at Pearson that spotted drivers pulled over to the side of the 401, standing on their car roofs photographing the spectacle with their camera phones.

Yesterday was a good day. It's rare that something like that happens and everybody gets out alive. In fact it's quite amazing and I think everybody should be thankful and happy that there were no fatalities.

Of course, this kind of event brings the nutjobs out en masse:

Cloak and Dagger

RADIO-NEWS Bulletin

4:54 PM EDT August 2, 2005

WAR BETWEEN BRITAIN

AND FRANCE BREAKS

OUT IN TORONTO

Toronto - British Secret Police Forces attacked an Air France Jet at Pearson Toronto Airport this afternoon.

This escalation of hostilities comes on the heels of four British MI-6 agents being arrested by the French in Chicago and are in detention for attempting to assassinate the Chicago Grand Jury Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald who brought down criminal indictments against George Bush and Dick Cheney last night.

Last week French Special Forces prevented British Intel from assassinating Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald.

Stay tuned to the Cloak for more breaking news on this new escalation of the ongoing Anglo-French War.

It seems things are unraveling fast.

This came from <http://www.cloakanddagger.de/>, which if you look at the web page has the stamp of CREDIBILITY all over it. (*sarcasm*). Note to the fringe: animated graphics and java ticker messages are the stamp of the loons and the lowfi net users. If you want to be taken seriously, do not use these elements in your web pages. They've gone the way of the tag.

I remember when JFK Jr. went down in his plane and there were nutjobs posting all kinds of conspiracy theories about it, one going so far as to claim the event was prophesized by Nostradamus.

This is getting ridiculous folks. The lunatic fringe is diluting the credibility of true social, political and economic scrutiny and criticism.

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Nutjob Watch at 14:24

Saturday, July 30, 2005

I stand corrected.

It looks like I made a poor choice of an examples in my How To Detect a net.myth in 4 easy steps post the other day. The original article in American Conservative magazine is available from their website here, so the article itself is real. I must have overlooked it the first couple times I was on the website.

In tracking down an "original sighting" of the article I left a message in Larouche Publications general mailbox after reading their Guns of August press release on the matter. Anton Chaiktin was kind enough to return my call this morning and point me to the original article on the website. Further, he added that White House Chief-of-Staff Scott McClelland was asked about this on thursday and the exchange was picked up by CNN.

I can at least tell that the exchange happened, since full transcripts of the White House briefings are available from the White House website and thursday's session contains this exchange:Q: Scott, an article in the American Conservative by Philip Giraldi, former intelligence operative, indicated the Vice President has revamped strategy towards Iran where there are now 300 to 400 missiles targeted various sites in Iran, including tactical nuclear missiles, especially aimed at the Iranian nuclear capabilities. These are now, according to Giraldi, also under command of the theater commander.

Given our problems with Iran and the fact that now that they have decided to go for the full cycle of their peaceful nuclear program, might we be anxious that if there were a terrorist incident here in the United States in any way connected to Iran, that there might be a knee-jerk reaction of utilizing this hair-trigger against the Iranians?MR.

McCLELLAN: One, I appreciate your question. I'm not going to get into accepting anything that you alleged in your comments. I'm not going to get into discussing matters relating to national security of that nature.

Two, in terms of Iran, Iran made some commitments to suspend their uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities. We expect them to abide by that commitment. If they were to begin those activities again, they would be violating the commitment they made under the Paris agreement with the Europeans. And we have made it very clear that Iran has a history of hiding their nuclear activities from the international community. That's why it's so important that you have some confidence-building measures, or objective guarantees in place, so that they show the international community that their nuclear program is not being used to develop weapons, or that they're not developing weapons under the cover of a civilian program.

And if Iran is going to violate their agreements, then we would, obviously, be looking at discussing with the Europeans, who have also committed to doing so, looking at going to the Security Council.

So I stand corrected on doubting the veracity of the original quoted article. It is real, and perhaps this post emphasizes my earlier point, now that I've found citations outside the original circular linkages.

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Nutjob Watch at 11:42

Friday, July 29. 2005

Can't time the market? Try timing terrorism or earthquakes. Aug 6th and 9th loom.

I've been picking up some chatter from the fringe of a "terrorist event" on Aug 6 or Aug 9, having to do with a "dirty bomb" or a suitcase nuke detonation in commemoration of the A-bomb's on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. The first I've heard of it laid it on a politically extremist splinter group of the Japanese Yakuza: payback after 60 years. Others are calling it "the next false flag" op, and lot of readers in some places are reading a lot of "meaning" into the 9-stripe US flags behind Bush at his Fort Bragg speech, portending ominous events to gel on these dates.

Then of course there's always George Ure and his web bots perpetually predicting "the big megaquake" to hit the west coast "any day now".

My wife and I were actually slated to travel to Victoria on the 4th thru the 8th but those plans have been scrapped. No, we didn't cancel because we wanted to avoid militant Yakuza nuclear reprisals and we aren't trying to "time the big one". I think we both feel pretty silly for changing our honeymoon plans 3 years ago on account of the Iraq War. We were planning on going to England and then Europe, we changed our minds because the war looked to be a certainty and we were worried about terrorism.

The silliness of that attitude comes hot on the heels of the dual bomb attacks in London, years after we scrapped our trip "on terrorism fears". Ironically I knew two separate sets of people visiting London on the exact dates of both recent attacks. It never even occurred to me to wonder "if they were ok". I didn't even have to bother doing the math to come to a reasonably certain conclusion that they were fine.

This brings me back to my "Law Of The Expected Unexpected" and I can go on record right now and say that August 6th and 9th will be the two days this year that a nuclear terrorist event can't happen (Refresher: The Law of The Expected Unexpected states that any given future date upon which a catastrophe is posited to occur is the one date upon which the actual event predicted is impossible. An example is if anybody goes on record to state that the stock market will crash on X date, that is the one date in the future on which it is impossible for the stock market to crash. Same goes for asteroid hits, earthquakes, alien invasions and terrorist events)

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Nutjob Watch at 15:54

Thursday, July 28, 2005

How to detect a net.myth in 4 easy steps.

I've mentioned George Ure's UrbanSurvival many times here. Always interesting, one of my daily rituals is to read it while I eat lunch at my desk. The problem when you make your mainstay exploring the wider fringes of culture, technology and economics is a lack of third-party verification on many things. George falls prey to this from time to time. Take this week's report that Dick Cheney has asked StratCom to game out an attack on Iran in the event of "9/11: the sequel", whether Iran was involved or not. Truly chilling stuff. "The Pentagon, acting under instructions from Vice President Dick Cheney's office, has tasked the United States Strategic Command (STRATCOM) with drawing up a contingency plan to be employed in response to another 9/11-type terrorist attack on the United States. The plan includes a large-scale air assault on Iran employing both conventional and tactical nuclear weapons. Within Iran there are more than 450 major strategic targets, including numerous suspected nuclear-weapons-program development sites. Many of the targets are hardened or are deep underground and could not be taken out by conventional weapons, hence the nuclear option. As in the case of Iraq, the response is not conditional on Iran actually being involved in the act of terrorism directed against the United States. Several senior Air Force officers involved in the planning are reportedly appalled at the implications of what they are doing – that Iran is being set up for an unprovoked nuclear attack – but no one is prepared to damage his career by posing any objections."

Scary as that is, it looks bogus to me, and I'll outline the steps I take to weed these things out:

1) Google an excerpt of the excerpt.

Look at the results. On any given issue you should see a mixture of mainstream, fringe and blogosphere hits from all sides of the issue. If the issue is real and white hot, then everybody and their hangnails will have something to say about it, from all sides of the spectrum.

These results are pretty consistent and homogenous. They all come from the "conspiracy fringe" and they're all pretty inflammatory ("Cheney to Nuke Iran In Event of Another 9/11", etc)

2) Cross reference against news sources.

We all know what passes for "news" in the mainstream is more like Orwellian soma, but if something is real it will at least get picked up there if only to downplay it and declare it a non-issue.

At this stage you don't want to use the excerpt, you want to do a new search with a keyword dense query.

In this case we see use +Cheney +Stratcom +nuclear +Iran +Terrorism and we get a couple hits, from more sources that seemed to have picked up the meme "as is". But for a "something real" we should see a lot more sources here. If not the national services then at least a smattering of regional affiliates of mainstream news conglomerates and wire services should have some chatter around it. There isn't any.

3) Look for natural "drift".

At this point, a real article that is this inflammatory, we would see different excerpts quoted and commented by different people with different viewpoints. If you keep seeing the exact same excerpt quoted in exactly the same manner and find the citations to be circular rather than linear (everyone links to the next nutjob's blog and nobody links back to the original source), the story is further suspect.

4) Try the source.

This one will settle it. I don't have access to the latest issue of American Conservative and wouldn't know where to get one up here in Canada (where American Conservatives loathe to tread). I did call their office and found that they're closed from July 22 thru Aug 12th, now that's convenient and also a huge red flag.

So my guess is this is either a bogus story or the one excerpt has been taken in a very narrow context and then jumpstarted out the blogosphere. People eat this stuff up, it isn't hard to whip people into a frenzied countdown to armageddon. (As I've noted before, there seems to be a certain class of people who are truly disappointed when stuff like this fails to transpire as advertised).

If anyone has "the latest" copy of American Conservative (an exact issue number cite usually accompanies most real stories), or contact info for Philip Giraldi (the article's author) then let me know.

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Nutjob Watch at 17:05

Wednesday, July 20, 2005

The new four letter F-word is: FAIL

Apparently there is an initiative underway in the UK to drop the use of the word "fail" for children who don't pass onto the next grade, in favour of "deferred success".

This makes all the sense in the world if we want to train our children that life is always fair and that everyone succeeds (even when they don't). With the pervasiveness of political double-speak in the world, where politicians say one thing, do another and then revise what they say they said or redefine the meaning of what they claim to have meant when they said it, then it is no surprise that it seems ok to delude ourselves and our children into thinking this kind of deceptive claptrap is ok.

We are now taking the final steps of indoctrinating the children into believing a load of horse manure is ice cream because we serve it to them with a cherry on top.

What a world we live in.

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Nutjob Watch at 14:35

Wednesday, June 8, 2005

Prediction: June 6, 2006 conspiracy theories to surface

I noticed this on the plane out here on monday, I looked at my phone and saw the date: 06/06/05. It occurred to me that next year the MM/DD/YY date strings on all devices worldwide will read 06/06/06.

This is all it takes: wait for a conspiracy theory to emerge around this date, it will be singled out as some sort of seminal moment in human history: WWII will start, asteroid hit, coup d'etat and imposition of martial law in the US, suitcase nuke somewhere, we're waiting for the "what" gets predicted to happen on that day, not "if" a wild theory will evolve in advance of it.

Remember my Law of the Expected Unexpected, whatever the conspiracy theory posits for 06/06/06, it will absolutely, positively not occur on that day in particular. (Douglas Adams had a name for it in Hitchhiker's Guide: a number whose value can be anything but itself, and its use in practice was that the given hour for a dinner party was the one moment in time where it was impossible for any of the guests to arrive).

The smart way to play 06/06/06, from a working conspiracy theorist's vantage point is to posit something that won't be immediately disproved by June 7th arriving without the world ending. Birth of the AntiChrist is always a good one. It still leaves years to write books, hit the lecture circuit and start a small cult of personality around the theory.

Proof of my theory that a conspiracy, apocalyptic, messianic meme around 06/06/06 will emerge will occur when George Ure's friend Cliff, over at the Web Bot Project picks up a lot of chatter around this theme. (Maybe this post will kick that process off

Gentlemen, start your hysteria engines.

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Nutjob Watch at 09:51