

How to get “real Italian pizza”

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ABSTRACT

The following critical book review discusses the insights by Jeff Jarvis in *What Would Google Do* and Chris Anderson in *The Long Tail*. Each author provides stimulating discourse on the revolution of the internet and its benefits to the success of business practices today. Jarvis highlights the ingenious tactics practiced by Google and the necessity of implanting them into other industries and fields. Anderson introduces a framework that changes the way businesses choose to market their products and services. Although not recently published, these two bestsellers are classics in their field and present a case to be considered. They are appraised in a constructive and humorous context, leading the reader to the nearest outlet to obtain the reads and see for themselves! Above all, this review will reveal the secret to acquiring the best Real Italian Pizza.

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“Google is not just a company, it is an entirely new way of thinking. Jarvis has done something really important: extend that approach to business and culture, revealing just how revolutionary it is.”

Chris Anderson, *The Long Tail*

“The impending shift away from the mass-market economy was chronicled famously in Chris Anderson’s era-defining 2006 book, *The Long Tail*...”

Jeff Jarvis, *What Would Google Do?*

Remember when you had a craving for that pizza you had years ago in Italy, and wanted to find the next best thing in your far-from Napoli, metropolitan city? What did you do? Lift that 10-pound Yellow Pages book out from under your coffee table, and begin to

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search under 'Pizza.' There were no pictures of the pizza to ignite nostalgia back to Napoli, there were simply alphabetical listings: "A+ Pizza," "Bob's Real Italian Food," and "Casa Di Nonna." So, which was the best? Your gut says go with "Casa Di Nonna" - it sounds like it must serve 'real Italian pizza.' Fast Forward: 2012. Instantaneously, pick up your iPhone and upload the *BlogTo* App, search 'best Italian pizza near me' and pronto! Endless results of what your neighbours have tried and rated to be the closest thing to what you are craving. Rosa, owner of "Casa Di Nonna" could not be more thrilled. Without a single dollar on advertising, her customer base has been developed. The community reported back through a platform, bringing her new and returning business. This concept is one of many that both Jeff Jarvis (in *What Would Google Do*) and Chris Anderson (in *The Long Tail*) bring to light when discussing the revolutionary impact of the internet - what it means to various companies, their marketing standards and how their relationships have developed with their publics. Although published a few years back (which can be decades in tech-terms), their discourses are classics in the field and must be considered.

Part I: Mr. Cellophane

Jeff Jarvis, by evidence of his blog, *buzzmachine.com* and abovementioned book, is a man who takes his own advice. His references to the almost disturbingly successful transparency practices by Google are also reflected in his discussions related to personal values and practices. We learn that Jarvis has been engulfed and surrounded by the news and media industry, he is a liberal at heart, but a democratic voter, and a "lousy investor" (Jarvis, 2005). While Google doesn't share its investor tidbits or political views, its willingness to share its work with the public and seek help from its users deems their thoughts and practices as transparent, as does Jarvis through his writing. Google has a never-ending beta service, a constant 'test' of their products to gain consumer insight and feedback - a loophole for never having to apologize for mistakes or technical malfunctions (Jarvis, 2009, p. 93). This, like many other successful internet business tactics, is explained in Jarvis' well-written insights on Google and in his guide to how they can be related to other industries.

Anderson proves a similar approach to transparency in his method to merging business and personal gains. *The Long Tail* is a simple, shrewd framework that has been structured and developed by Anderson, enjoyably

explaining the benefits that the internet has brought to many industries by putting products and services directly into consumers' hands. It began as an article, evolved into a blog and then finally became a book (Banks, 2008). Why add the step of a blog and not shoot straight for the paperback? Anderson played his success smart. It was not a question of why give away ideas for 'free' in a blog and not have people buy the book. But, as Google was willing to share its ideas and work with the public in order to benefit its product, so did Anderson. There was a personal and professional gain with the offering of his thoughts –through his blog; he gained insights from the public to ensure that his book would be successful (Banks, 2008).

Part 2: Build it and they will come – but they're already there!

It is pretty safe to say that a bag of jujubes that has been in a household for 2 weeks likely has only a few pieces left in a couple of flavours. In an informal test, with a sample size of good friends over a relaxing weekend at the cottage, results indicated that there were a few flavours of jujubes that were left over in the bag – so let's run with it. Given these unscientific results (and, please do take with a grain of salt – or sugar, in this instance!), the majority of people like every other flavour besides a select few, so the confectionary companies make more of the other preferred flavours. Instead of making a bag full of equal amounts of every flavour of jujube – they cater to the masses, or what the average person likes, in order to sell more. Imagine a world where jujubes fell from the sky – an infinite amount, not confined to an overpriced, small package at the movie theatre. Then, the confectionary company could and should make as many of each flavour jujube as they wanted to – they would have unlimited space and could please everyone.

This is the basic premise behind Anderson's *The Long Tail*. In a day before *Amazon*, *Ebay* and *BlogTo*, when we had to go to the movie store and pick out only what was available on the shelf, businesses had to use their shelf space wisely, putting only products that the average person would want and would most definitely sell (Anderson, 2008). Now, in the internet age, there is unlimited, cost-free space, so inventory can be infinite – all that is needed is the distribution (Anderson, 2008). Movie selections can be provided to anyone, without limitation. So jujube lovers everywhere can sit at home with a bag of their favourite flavoured candy, watching any movie they desire. Anderson explains that with the internet, there is no limit to space or time; we have

evolved from a world of scarcity to abundance, where supply has met demand (Anderson, 2008). We don't have to go to the store when it is open and choose from what they have. We can go online at 3 a.m. and find nearly anything we want. Businesses have the opportunity to cater to the niches – not just the hits – and experience endless revenue streams (Anderson, 2008). This idea that “small is the new big” (Jarvis, 2009, p. 55) boasts colossal opportunity for one-man-show businesses. A writer does not need a major publisher to profit (Jarvis, 2009). With the rise of the internet, anyone can write to everyone and get his or her information out instantly to the biggest audience yet (Jarvis, 2009) – a concept that Jarvis himself tributes Anderson as “era-defining.”

So, where do all of these people come from? Jarvis explains that these communities already existed; they just needed platforms in order to communicate and express themselves (Jarvis, 2009). He explains an ingenious move made by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, who had failed to study for an upcoming exam. Zuckerberg decided to leverage the existing student community, by creating a ‘study guide’, consisting of a number of potential exam questions. By sending the document out to the student network and proposing this as a benefit to helping them study, eventually this resulted in all of the answers to the questions being completed on his behalf. In the end, essentially benefiting Zuckerberg (Jarvis, 2009). The community and supply are always out there. The niche is always in demand. All that is missing is the right tool, in this case the manufactured study guide, for them to get there (Anderson, 2008).

The best part of about all of this opportunity and unlimited public – it's F.R.E.E. Just like with Rosa at “Casa Di Nonna,” businesses don't need to invest in shelf space or retail property (Anderson, 2008). Interested homebuyers don't need to hire real estate agents (Jarvis, 2009) – what will all of those realtors do with their paid bus bench ads? And, most interestingly, this concept of ‘FREE’ is now an encouraged business model (Jarvis, 2009). Forget those gigantic marketing and advertising dollars being put towards magazine pages (uh-oh, hold on, that's my industry!) and buy digital ad space on Google (where everyone knows your name, and will see it) for a fraction of the cost.

Part 3: Scratch my back... and I'll scratch yours?

Having all of this unlimited free space gives the purchasing power and control to the end user, the customer. The business must trust the ‘3 a.m.-ers,’ reminiscing about their past and purchasing old music. Aside from the direct

purchase transaction, what about the other relationships that online businesses have with their publics? If a business provides second-rate service to someone who happens to have a blog about *anything* with a number of followers, that business best fear that its reputation is most definitely on the line. Jarvis tells us his story about purchasing a new computer – a Dell. After several attempts to have it fixed and hours of phone calls with customer service, Jarvis shares his story on his blog and creates an enormous amount of noise from other people who have experienced similar problems with the infamous computer conglomerate (Jarvis, 2009). The moral of his story? Trust and control are in the hands of a business' publics, "the more you (a business) control, the less you will be trusted" (Jarvis, 2009, p. 82). Quite fittingly, this concept around trust and control lapse back to our initial discussion of transparency. The more that a company is transparent the more that it is trusted (Anderson, 2008). Providing as much information as possible on a product is better than not providing enough (Anderson, 2008). Society is "information-rich" (Anderson, 2008, p. 223) and does not need to be told what to do with the information being presented to them – they can be trusted. As long as it is there for them to dissect, they will figure out how to disseminate, analyze and review – and believe you me, they love to provide reviews!

The moral of the story here is, to tell everyone everything, get your pizza at Casa Di Nonna's, choose your favourite jujube and pick up both *What Would Google Do* and *The Long Tail* for thought-provoking and intuitive best-sellers. In other words, we can say that the internet has entirely changed the way that we communicate and make decisions. On the contrary, it can be argued that it has provided us with the tools to do what we have always been accustomed to doing but in a more efficient manner. In a matter of seconds, it will allow you to order the printed copies of the abovementioned publications to your doorstep, or directly to your e-reader – options available for every type of consumer. Businesses want to sell as much as possible to everyone – they want to prove *The Long Tail*. The internet has made this possible with unlimited inventory available to the niches. Two heads (or 2 billion heads) are always better than one, so having a means for communication, to collect ideas from everyone from everywhere allows businesses to flourish and gain insight from every perspective – they just have to be open to it (though in order to survive, they have no choice). Businesses must adopt and keep up with the tools that allow their publics to be involved; otherwise, they'll just end up in the Yellow Pages!

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