



## Saturday, March 29th, 2003

Feel ancient entering the world of blogging as late as 2003. Guess being on the cutting edge of technology all these years has taken its toll

Feel almost guilty thinking about anything other than the “shock and awe” freakshow.

Lots of people still wonder why they should be bothered because the war doesn't affect their lives! What does one say to human beings(?) like this? It will baffle the mind. And while the powers that be are off playing video games, the human race is hell bent on self-destructing ... Version 1.0 should never have been released. Who was responsible for QA? Would take a zillion years to compile a bug report.

## Tuesday, April 1st, 2003

Uncle S, kub tuk bhagtay raho gay? Satellites and the Net give us eyes behind our heads. Mauj kar lo kuch din aur iss liye kay “laazim hai kay hum bhee dekhain gay ...”

Arshad Mahmud came over yesterday and sang “Go sub ko bahum ...” It took the edge off a nasty experience that boggled our minds earlier. Someone called up and said that Ziad's mother had died, turned out to be an April Fool's joke! How far are people willing to go for cheap thrills? It was cruel and completely NOT FUNNY. Later in the evening, Jehan Ara's mother passed away. How easy it is to intellectualize these things; she's out of her misery, relieved of her pain. But the heart can't comprehend such cold, calculated intellect. In the morning, she had 3 months to live, a few hours later, she was dead. Is that going to happen to Foo Khala too? How strange and wanton comes death, unannounced, unplanned ... Anyway, enough grayscale ...

Tonight we shall listen to Abdullah Niazi - yay!! Hope they take requests, dying to hear Munum Mehvay Jamal-e-oo ...

## **Wednesday, April 2nd, 2003**

On Peter Arnett, recently fired by NBC and NatGeo for speaking his mind ...

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Corn said Arnett was in a tough spot because if he refused to do the interview he risked being expelled from Iraq. And yet, Corn added, "There is a question to be raised whether anybody who likes democracy and freedom of the press should sit for an interview with a state-controlled media entity unless you're going to try to engage and use it to bring your values to its audience. Doing it in a time of war seems even more perilous from a political perspective."

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If Arnett believed in what he said, why is he contrite? Secondly, why can't journalism be about opinions? All journalists working for US media corporations have to toe the line so why be contemptuous of "state controlled media entities"? What values is CNN espousing to its audience? Freedom of the press is a myth. At least state-controlled media doesn't claim to uphold the pillars of journalism through honest reporting. Everyone knows that they are propoganda vehicles and they don't spend millions of bucks telling you that it isn't so. The ultimate purveyors of truth, CNN, Fox, NBC, and countless other free entities are only in the business of doing what Washington tells them to so it really doesn't have anything to do with "liking democracy".

## **Friday, April 4th, 2003**

The qavaali was crap. Never got round to making any requests. Meray Banay Kee Baat Na Poocho was ok but didn't like the Qaul too much. I don't understand why people need to show their appreciation by flinging money at the performers. We were even asked to clap for a mureed of Hazrat Gaisoo Daraz!!! What utter rubbish. Anyway, seeing good old Manzoor Niazi was a treat.

Arshad Mahmud kay saath bayhad mazaa aaya. Really enjoyed the demo of Moorchana, that went from Raag Sri to Megh to Bhopali to Sri to Durga ...

At lunch today, someone said that all human beings are fundamentally driven by "khauf"/fear. He was adamant and claimed that if he had the luxury of time, he'd PROVE the validity of his notion. We also talked about "cheating". Is it criminal, is it acceptable? Lots of viewpoints ...

## **Saturday, April 5th, 2003**

lib.er.a.tion:

The act or process of trying to achieve equal rights and status.

How come George gets to decide whether someone should be liberated or not? Highly simplistic thought? Maybe. But then again, a guy with an IQ lower than the average village idiot is “running” the most powerful country on earth.

Zayed Yasin (highly controversial Harvard grad) came over to the office today to talk to us about war, peace, and liberation ... there was much consternation in America over Harvard’s decision to choose him as one of three student orators to speak at the commencement. He said his speech turned out to be a real anti-climax as people were expecting him to arrive with a long beard and oonchi shalwar and try and justify killing in the name of jihad. For all the pre-speech hype, hue and cry, post speech, there was nothing. At any rate, there was nothing inflammatory about what he said. Anyway, very interesting, smart chap, really enjoyed meeting him.

## **Sunday, April 6th, 2003**

Balancing Form and Function ...

Ever since I fell in love with my Macintosh, I gave people a convenient box to place me in - “IT expert”, “computer whiz”. This is nothing short of a tragedy. I fell in love with the Mac OS because it was a revolution in usable computing. Sure, I am a tech enthusiast and a sexy new gadget from Palm or Apple will turn me on more than a piece of jewellery but that’s about it. Actually, even 3 lines of XML code will turn me on more than a piece of jewellery but that’s not the issue here ...

The Mac OS liberated those of us who couldn’t get past the friggin C: prompt. The computer for the rest of us - insanely great! The Macintosh is a perfect balance of form AND function. Great looking and kick-ass functionality. People like Tog really cared about human beings and how we interact with machines/technology. Cars, houses, showers, teapots - everything that is designed is going to be used - by real people. The user of one of these creations is far more important than the ego of the designer. The teapot on the cover of Donald Norman’s “The Design of Everyday Things” is a perfect example of sacrificing function for form. Stupid beyond all comprehension. Badly designed products make their users feel dumb because the average individual cannot conceive that

the designer could possibly be at fault. "It must be me! I can't figure out this shower, so I must be an idiot."

I spend 3/4ths of an average day fretting about the nature and dynamics of the user experience, not about the technology that will power the experience. It's about the user - not about Flash, ASP or .Net. More on this later ...

## **Monday, April 7th, 2003**

I need to write a couple of proposals and just can't get my act together. Started reading a book called "The French Mathematician". Have suffered from a total disconnect with math all my life but am convinced of the beauty and intrigue of numbers. People who can "see" proofs are fascinating ... the language/style is excessive and would have caused poor Strunk to have mad convulsions, but anyway, if I manage to get interested in mathematics as a result, it'll be well worth the single red note I paid for it.

Back to form and function ... a couple of years ago, the web exploded with zillions of unfortunate Flash-based sites that should never ever have been FTPd onto a hosting server. Gyrating menus, hideous bouncing typography, repetitive sound-effects from hell, pathetic navigation - those were terrible times. Macromedia's killer product was battered and abused, earning the scorn of usability guru, Jacob Nielsen ... it was sad because the product is capable of such lean vector-based output ...

More later ...

gotta go learn some math

## **Wednesday, April 9th, 2003**

Norah Jones is such a welcome departure from the crap that clogs the airwaves these days. Didn't discover her earlier because I don't go anywhere near what passes off as music these days. Just assumed that she'd be another Britney Spears and the fact that she's Ravi Shankar's daughter wasn't enough to make me listen. The shock of Bruce Springsteen's latest venture was just too much for my nerves, so the strategy now is to stay away. This leads to occasionally missing some good stuff but at least one doesn't wind up with a perpetual grimace brought on by NOISE.

Anyway, the Farid Ayazuddin Qavval Group ROCKS!

## **Thursday, April 10th, 2003**

Some people just don't get it. No matter what you do or say, they are just too caught up in the whirlpool of the self to be able to think objectively, analytically, and introspectively. Such folks are better off somewhere else.

## **Friday, April 11th, 2003**

It doesn't end when it ends. Whatever can possibly go wrong WILL. Locked my goddamn key in the boot of my car and have been sitting in the parking lot getting bitten to death by mosquitos for the last 1 hour. Trudged back to BITS and am now blogging away on a Wintel!!!!^&&% cause my poor iBook is languishing in the boot! Am going to Washington on Sunday night to pay my last respects to someone I never realised meant so much to me until I heard she was going to die.

## **Sunday, June 8th, 2003**

Just pulled a mean all-nighter. Slave to the corporation, in a round-about but too close for comfort kinda way. Got to sort out this twilight zone. Went for a walk at 4:30 a.m. Khayaban-e-Ittehad was clean, quiet, and peaceful. Client's due at 11:00 a.m. - two more blank windows to go -

At dinner, we were talking about how Macromedia and Adobe approach product design as compared to MicroSnot. Bill missed the Internet boat, none of the web apps are really geared towards good, clean code generation. Macromedia and Adobe - inspired by Apple - have produced a fantastic set of PowerTools for "real" web designers; unlike shit like Visual Studio.

Just can't get enough of my new 12" G4 laptop. It's such a beauty, even though it has two screen pixels missing, heats up like crazy, and is very intolerant of even slightly uneven surfaces. Mac OS 10.2.6 works like a dream (no blue screens of death yet) ... fave little killer app is LaunchBar.

Can't understand people who aren't proactive. What's with them? Why are they so lame? Doesn't anything turn them on? Guess not.

## **Friday, June 20th, 2003**

29! Weird. Never thought age would matter. And according to some, I am “losing my mind”, so it all fits.

May - June 2003 >> Truly hideous months. Have also realised that people just cannot cope with openness. We live in a world of ostriches. Don't rock the boat, keep it all inside, lie if you have to ... hypocrisy is easier and more desirable than the truth.

Another thing I don't get ... Why do twenty-somethings (haven't come to terms with “tween” yet) enter the workplace and then behave as if they are in playschool? Why is the demand for competence, precision, speed, and excitement viewed as outrageous and unreasonable? The expectation that people should “work” in exchange for a salary ... is it altogether bizarre? Aur agar koi mussla hai to bhai khul kar baat karein na yaar. Petty politics should be left to the National Assembly.

## **Friday, June 20th, 2003**

So much easier to interact with machines than with human beings.

Accha BUSS. Bahut ho gaya! Move On and Get With The Program(me)! Moaning, groaning, whinging, and whining never got anyone anywhere.

## **Friday, July 11th, 2003**

Sufis confuse the living daylight out of me. Riddled in complexity, arcana, and mystical mumbo-jumbo ... I don't know what to make of them. Don't HAVE to make anything of them but still, it helps to be able to grasp concepts, at least in theory.

Got interested in qavvali primarily because of the intensity of the music. A deeper fascination led to a superficial study of sufism, never could get very far because logic prevails and there's just that much one can put down to you know what.

## **Monday, July 14th, 2003**

Do NOT eat kabab rolls in the summer. Have spent all of Sunday in the loo and it's NO FUN. Was zonked on Monday and crawled out of bed, feeling like a dog. Attempts to get to work at 8:45 a.m. were unsuccessful. Finally made it at 1:45 p.m. clutching my tummy and feeling extremely wobbly.

That aside, nothing else of note has occurred. I guess I just feel too sorry for myself to consider anything else significant. How pathetic. Went to the *Youth Initiative for Peace* closing ceremony on Saturday night and wept consistently for 2 hours. I was so impressed with my little sister (= *Ragni Marea Kidvai*); in fact I was WoWed. Probably the closest I will ever come to feeling like a proud parent. She was so self-assured, confident, and real. I feel shitty that the last few years, I have been working 24/7 and missed so many opportunities to get to know her. Now she's off to college and everything will change, which is great actually. I hope we get really close over e-mail and IM. She also wrote me an amazingly long letter for my birthday which I need/want to respond to. The YiPpIeS are a really special bunch of people - keep the faith!

### **Thursday, July 17th, 2003**

AAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRGGGGGGGGGGGGGGH!

### **Thursday, July 17th, 2003**

This blasted blog has turned into one big rant. This HAS TO CHANGE. Need to think different! However, this whole caching nightmare is driving me to total and utter distraction. Safari is as pathetic as IE as far as the Cache is concerned. Just deleted /Users/beanz/Library/Caches/Safari ... created a text file called Safari - sans three character extension so that Safari can't create a new folder for its cache - NOTHING!!!! Still get the same ol shit.

### **Friday, July 18th, 2003**

YaY!!!!!!!!!! The blasted cache was coming off the server. Trust the techies to never listen. Apologies to Apple/Safari for being nasty. "Should have known better ..."

Watched an episode of *The Practise* a couple of days ago ... the jury verdict was really unbelievable. Must check to see how many such cases have actually taken place ... the foreman got up and announced that the jury was disgusted with the prosecution, the defense and the judge as no one really gave a damn about the case. They claimed no evidence had been provided in order for them to reach a verdict and that the entire debacle was a slap in the face of the justice system. The judge was furious by this time and said that if the foreman did not immediately either stop jabbering or pronounce a verdict, the jury would be held in contempt. The foreman took off his glasses and calmly announced that it would indeed be fitting as the entire jury felt nothing but contempt. All the jury members were hauled off into custody and a mis-trial was declared.

## Monday, July 21st, 2003

Read a lot of Peanuts yesterday. Schulz was truly special. Apart from being able to represent the gamut of human emotion with the simplest of strokes, his sensitivity was unsurpassed. For an adult to be able to gauge the reactions of children in scores of situations is just [here comes the hyperbole] AWESOME!!!!

My all time favourite is [“Will You Share My C?”](#)

Formal education based on the factory model causes this!

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*Sally: A ‘C’? A ‘C’? I got a ‘C’ on my coat hanger sculpture? How could anyone get a ‘C’ in coat hanger sculpture? May I ask a question? Was I judged on the piece of sculpture itself? If so, is it not true that time alone can judge a work of art? Or was I judged on my talent? If so, is it fair that I be judged on a part of my life over which I have no control? If I was judged on my effort, then I was judged unfairly, for I tried as hard as I could! Was I judged on what I had learned about this project? If so, then were not you, my teacher, also being judged on your ability to transmit your knowledge to me? Are you willing to share my ‘C’? Perhaps I was being judged on the quality of coat hanger itself out of which my creation was made...now is this not also unfair? Am I to be judged by the quality of coat hangers that are used by the dry cleaning establishment that returns our garments? Is that not the responsibility of my parents? Should they not share my ‘C’? [teachers voice is heard] Thank you, Miss Othmar. (to audience) The squeaky wheel gets the grease!*

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## Thursday, July 24th, 2003

Watched “Inherit the Wind” last night - a Stanley Kramer production. Spencer Tracey and Gene Kelly had key roles - what fabulous acting and direction.

A dramatic rendition of a true story. Teacher gets jailed for teaching Darwin’s theory of evolution and the descent of man in a hick town called Hillsboro, a.k.a. the buckle of the bible belt. All “hell” breaks loose and what ensues is a gripping courtroom drama that pits an atheist defense lawyer against a gung-ho believer ...

Guess it’s too dangerous to say what I believe and feel about issues of creation, religion and faith.

## **Sunday, July 27th, 2003**

If it wasn't bad enough being at work on a Sunday, the rain has brashly bypassed the double-layer windows and gone straight to my power-block. Didn't even realise until I got up and nearly went flying as a result of all the water at my feet. Bloody hell, don't even know where the mops are. Have decided to pretend this is not happening and as a result, am in the loo with my Powerbook. As it's very cold in the office, for once the heat generated by this sex-bomb (the G4 12" laptop!) feels quite good.

### **ABSOLUT ESCAPE!**

Am rediscovering the Doors - what a trip. Still feel sorry for poor Ray Manzarek - master keyboardist, always in the shadow of Mojo Risin ...

Awake,  
shake dreams from your hair my pretty child, my sweet one.  
Choose the day and  
choose the sign of your day  
The day's divinity  
First thing you see ...

Last night, while I was crossing over into lalaland, my mother told me I looked 6 years old. When I was 6, my biggest problem was that I kept falling off my bicycle.

The architect of this building should be SHOT.

## **Thursday, July 31st, 2003**

H a t r e d   S p r i n g s   F r o m   T e x t s   o f   P a k i s t a n i   S c h o o l s  
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This is the title of a piece by Juliette Terzieff - a frightening account of how impressionable, young Pakistani minds are being warped by school textbooks. This is the sort of stuff that makes the "rest of the world" believe that Pakistan is a country populated by crazed terrorists.

My blood boils ... So Fucking What? Dr. Eqbal Ahmed, Tariq Ali, WHAT does one do to make a difference? Times are tough, doing honest business in this country is next to impossible, getting from one day to the next in a mad city like Karachi saps the life-blood out of us ... do we give up whatever we do to eke out

a living and start developing civil society? How many battles do we fight? Angelina Jolie can afford to give up her Hollywood career and take up the case of land-mines — she doesn't have to worry about where her next meal is coming from. How does an average middle-class citizen who gives a BIG SHIT about the downhill path we are on, do something to bring about meaningful change. I TRULY believe in the Power Of One but each time there's a goddamn insane deadline, the "causes" shift to the back-burner. It's impossible to sustain - unless one is in the "business".

What is fundamentally wrong with this country? There are too few people who WANT change. Why are people so unwilling to come out on the streets and demand accountability? What will it take and how and when? As life gets tougher, even those of us who did come out on the streets, are getting "tireder and tireder". Getting home at 2:00 a.m. every day doesn't leave much time for giving a damn about the public school curriculum. However, it is IMPERATIVE to do something. But when?

### **Thursday, July 31st, 2003**

The Education Ministry has the following wonderfully "potent" statement to make about the warped bullshit that's in our textbooks:

"We are constantly looking at ways to revise, reorder and update. Where there are problems they are addressed, and will continue to be."

What do these people eat for breakfast?

### **Sunday, August 3rd, 2003**

Today I am truly PISSED OFF and jealous of everyone who's enjoying a lazy Sunday at home ... resentful, cranky, and just plain TIRED. Hit my head on solid wood before coming to work - more joy.

Will be listening to Farid and Abu Mohammad on the 16th, for the first time after Munshi Jee's passing away. Must be so strange for them, a huge void. Or maybe not - sudden independence may help them move forward into the next phase of their career; no clue really. Stuff I want to hear:

- - Naseema Jaanib Bat-Haa Guzar Kun
- Sakhi Kaa Say Kahoon
- The Only Arabic Qavvali That Rocks - dunno what it's called but will find out this time -

- Guftam Keh Raushan Az Qamar
- Tori Har Ek Ada
- Khabaray Tahayyur Ishq Sun

Desperately seeking some variation and will outsource a small prayer that they don't disappoint this time. It's perfect timing - would've died if it had been this weekend - in the middle of a never-ending stream of insane deadlines.

If I'd work instead of updating this blasted blog, might stand a chance of getting out of here before midnite. Feel like I used to before exams - cognizant of the need to do something but completely lacking the will to MOVE. Have never behaved in this ridiculous fashion as far as work is concerned.

Na junoon raha, na pari rahi ...

## **Tuesday, August 12th, 2003**

What a piece of work is man, how noble in reason, How infinite in faculties,  
In form and moving, how express and admirable, In action, how like an angel,

In apprehension, how like a god.

Hmmmm ...

Feel a bit stricken with too much to say and not enough coherence. However, that sounds terribly like a Gen-X excuse for mindlessness. Aggravated a friend the other day when I said that "Friends" (the TV show) was a complete waste of space and was created to spread the disease of dumbness. But it's true!!!!!! Dumb down the masses by feeding them a diet of Friends, Ally McBeal, NBA, and NFL, ensure that they stay stupid and stay in CONTROL. It's so simple, really.

## **Tuesday, August 12th, 2003**

"Suddenly it was possible to say EVERYTHING to EVERYBODY but ... there was nothing to say!"

*Bertolt Brecht, speaking about radio (1933).*

Herein lies the reason why so much constipated content floats around our country. Our misbegotten programmers, graphic designers, animators, film-makers ... have

the tools of the trade, a small amount of skill, and zilch to say. Our schools and universities are consumed by tests, (describe the climate of Ukraine!) exams, grades and don't give a damn about the holistic development of children and young people. In the workplace, one gets lumped with semi-evolved ego-maniacs who can't see beyond their own noses.

If Farid and Abu Mohammad rock the house on Saturday night, I promise to post at least two "happy" entries. But it all depends on the level of spiritual elevation that is achieved.

## **Tuesday, August 19th, 2003**

Although spiritual elevation of the desired level did not occur on Saturday night, primarily owing to the absence of Munshi Raziuddin (WE WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU), it was good fun, in general. Really enjoyed "Naseema Jaanib Bat-Haa Guzar Kun" and "Sakhi Kaasay Kahoon". Was thrilled that Urooj came along and sang a little, he really has a stunningly different voice.

Was a grouch all of yesterday (I love trash) and am not a grouch today. Have been working like a dog all morning and am taking an hour off to sink my teeth into a juicy roast beef burger. Why should this be of any interest or consequence to anyone?

Need to rant about NGOs in Pakistan but promised to be positive so will do so tomorrow. Am ecstatic about finding CD session-burning software for OS X. Don't have Toast so this is a great discovery.

## **Wednesday, August 20th, 2003**

**envy**

n. pl. envies

A feeling of discontent and resentment aroused by and in conjunction with desire for the possessions or qualities of another.

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There are only two phenomena that arouse this feeling in me.

1. Arundhati Roy's political writings
2. Mac OS Programmers (the really geeky but eccentric variety)

To recover from the incompetence and mediocrity that surrounded me this morning, spent 1 hour reading Unsanity's blog. Fun all the way ... love your haxies. Stuff that really should've been embedded in X but Apple decided to leave out just to shatter our already frayed nerves.

A little more about the Farid Ayazuddin Qavaal Group sans Munshi Raziuddin ... watched a video last night that we recorded in February 2003. Realised with startling poignancy, the role of musical conductors. He maintained discipline with subtlety, raised the benchmarks of the performance consistently, wasn't willing to accept any goofups, and just kept everything together ... what an institution. His trademark gestures just made me weep. I wonder if Farid will be able to make the transition gracefully. May just go overboard which would be tragic.

## **Wednesday, August 27th, 2003**

Someone's been pestering me to switch to MT for days and finally I decide to get round to it ... Lo & Behold ... Host name lookup for 'www.moveabletype.org' failed ...

Sorry Ejaz. Maybe another day ...

Can't fathom why Apple's Safari, which is such a killer browser (super-fast and cool tabbed windows), cannot handle https:// via a proxy server. Manages fine on dialup so whatthe\$%%^!! Why don't they fix it? Dying for Version 2.0 - Was in such a daze this morning while booking a Chicago-Washington-Chicago ticket online that didn't think to do this in Internet Explorer. So, went 3/4 of the way through the process and of course, Safari freaked when payment time arrived. This sentence doesn't sound very coherent but what the hell ... Had to start over with IE. Then Southwest's form did not like the "/" I used in the address field so it growled and sent me back ... by this time the Session had expired!!! BONK!!! Hope the Southwest folk who built the site are coming to User Experience 2003. But actually, to be fair, the site's quite useable.

What else ... Our city continues to bleed and we continue to stand by and watch the potholes get deeper and our generals get fatter.

Wondering if I should get Seth Godin's Purple Cow ...

*4 guys gang-raped a 10 year old child!*

WHATKINDOFPEOPLEARETHESE?

*This is to be uttered dull, monotone style like Charlotte Corday in Marat/Sade [what a phenomenal film].*

Windows XP has a real problem with multimedia projectors and MPEG movies. Windows 98 doesn't.

Latest inspiration: Anita Roddick. If 1 in 20 business leaders had hearts and minds, the world would be different. Still shattered about losing my military-industrial complex article. Have all the resources but lost the actual text file that I was writing in. BUMMED!

The oil continues to spill ...

## **Saturday, August 30th, 2003**

From the back-cover of Adbusters, a little message for Nike ...



... JAM ON ...

As for those well-intentioned souls who believe that the Amazon's, eBay's and Nestle's even out the WorldCom's and Enron's; I have just two words:

**GROW UP.**

Enron, with a little help from its accountants, was just stupid enough to get caught. The foundation upon which corporations are built and the basis upon which they thrive, with a little help from the government and military forces, leaves little room for values and decency. Let's not be delusional ...

“In the councils of Government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will

persist.”

[Military-Industrial Complex Speech, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1961]

By no means should this imply that there is no hope or that nothing can be done about the terrifying power that corporations exert. Empires will topple, provided we confront them.

## **Monday, September 1st, 2003**

I met this **random** dude and he was **like**, you know, **whatever** ... Do we really sound like this?

hehe ...

Nothing is sacred.

It's one of those days when one sits around waiting for something to go wrong and nothing does and then you're like, why is everything going so well? Am beginning to realize that I thrive on a life fraught with chaos, stress, and tension. Anyway, let's not mock the peacefulness of this day and instead, use this time to stop and smell the flowers and not take ourselves so seriously.

## **Monday, September 8th, 2003**

Kudos to Sadruddin Hashwani for organizing a series of qavvalis in memory of Munshi Raziuddin. Recently attended the Karachi event which rocked! Farid and Abu were great and the troupe had obviously practised. The only minor issue was the lack of Farsi but anyway ... no big deal. Some chap in Islamabad had done a wonderful painting of Munshi Jee - captured the essence of the man - impish, inquiring, intense, intelligent ...

The Karachi Arts Council is hosting a memorial qavvali on the 9th of September at 9:00 p.m.

Today has been a roller-coaster: fun, irritating, exhilarating, stressful, uplifting, tiring ...

Yesterday, I listened to a tape from the KGS days - Age 13. Bon Jovi before they became lame, Electric Dreams, Candy's Room. Shed a couple of tears for those days and actually missed school for the first time since I left in a huff at 16.

## **Monday, September 8th, 2003**

Rumi sukhanay-e-kufr na guftast na goyed  
Kas dar hama aalam  
Kafir shavad aan kas ba inkaar baraamad  
Mardood-e-jahaan shud

Rumi has spoken in denial,  
And none in the wide world speaks or spoke thus,  
Those who came out in denial are cast out,  
And become rejects, world-wide.

## **Tuesday, September 30th, 2003**

Feel a bit dreadful not posting for days on end. Can see Ejaz's finger wagging in contempt

Am in Chicago - just finished attending User Experience 2003. Met my heroes - died and went to heaven - and am just about heading back. Of the three gods, Jakob Nielsen was basic and boring. Donald Norman was extremely intellectually stimulating and stirred a number of brain cells and sent them running in all directions. The Design of Everyday Things and Emotional Design were great fun. It was refreshing to take a step back from sitemaps, wireframes, project plans, and deadlines, and think about the work we do a little tangentially - but certainly very relevant.

Ejaz, in case you are wondering ... Peter Morville's Information Architecture 1 was not bad - but nothing great that we don't already know.

Tog! Now, what can I say without sounding like an unabashed groupie. Meeting him made my entire trip worthwhile within 10 minutes. He was everything I had imagined and much much more. To him we owe everything that's human(e) about the Mac OS. He's so anally INTO interface design that it excited every pore of my being. Attended a full day class with him and was shattered when it ended. The last day was with Jakob but I was bored to tears and jumped ship and landed in Tog's Visioneering (Vision + Engineering) class and I felt whole again. He really made us work and think and work and think.

All in all - Tog and Donald Norman + meeting a whole bunch of other conference attendees was a blast and a half. Mac users ruled! We were everywhere! The hotel

had WiFi hotspots so Airport cards were being tested to the hilt. Worked really well - seamless.

Post-conference - am just chilling ... it's great not to have to do anything in particular. Got a new Po Bronson and Doug Coupland books, in addition to a whole bunch of others. Should never go into Borders.

Peace!

## **Wednesday, October 1st, 2003**

Spent the day at the Art Institute of Chicago - obviously I am aging as I didn't RUN to the Contemporary/Modern galleries. Meandered very leisurely through European Painting ... and took in loads of Manet, Monet, Renoir, Gauguin, Cezanne, Degas, Van Gogh ...

Bartolomeo Manfredi's "Cupid Chastised" was really awesome. Mars, the god of war, beats the crap out of Cupid for having caused his affair with Venus, which exposed him to the derision of the other gods.

Manet's "Jesus Mocked by the Soldiers" ...

Seurat's "A Sunday on La Grande Jatte" was spectacular. He is surely the ultimate pixel pusher.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's Moulin Rouge renditions were very bizarre and intriguing. Lucian Freud's "8 Legs" was a bit weird and disturbing. A naked figure poses awkwardly on a bed holding a dog. Another pair of legs protrudes from under the bed. The dog is asleep, but the man holding her is awake and staring away from the viewer. Huh?????

Got a super surrealism fix - Dali, Duchamp, Magritte - loved Dali's "A Chemist Lifting with Extreme Precaution the Cuticle of a Grand Piano".

Marc Chagall has done a fantastically huge tribute to America in stained glass and celebrates the greatness of the United States and acclaims it as a country of freedom, liberty, culture and religious tolerance. Good thing for Chagall that he's dead and doesn't have to suffer through what America has now come to represent.

Quickly raced through an interesting exhibition - Intimate Encounters: Paul Gauguin and the South Pacific which marks the centenary of Paul Gauguin's (1848 -?1903) death by celebrating the Art Institute's recent gift from a Chicago collector of 40 drawings and prints by the great Post-Impressionist artist.

Represented are works created during his first Tahitian sojourn (1891-93), the Paris interlude (1893-95), and his final years in Tahiti and the Marquesas Islands (1895-1903). This body of work reveals the artist's search to put a face on the South Pacific culture he encountered during his last years.

Warhol's giant portrait of "Mao", nearly 15 feet in height was very powerful. Andy Warhol strove to examine every aspect of mass culture through silkscreened images of products, celebrities and political figures.

OK. The art in the museum is phenomenal. However, at no moment in time did I have a sense of where I was and where I could potentially go next. It was a totally disconcerting maze and I nearly missed the modern/contemporary galleries altogether. I could never decipher the Floor Plan and as a result was drifting from one space to the next like a lost soul. For years, we have, as creators of interactive virtual realities, striven to reproduce the museum experience. WELL, as an Information Architect, I was constantly conscious of the complete lack of Info Architecture in the Art Institute and longed for a navigational structure of some kind, breadcrumb trails, You Are Here, sensible cross-selling, contextual links ... I also really believe that sometimes less is more and the hugeness of all things American really boggles my brain.

Will hyperlink images to the above references at some point.

Cheers!! :-)

## **Wednesday, October 1st, 2003**

One little story about Pablo Picasso's "Mother and Child" that I wanted to share ... Picasso was a brutal editor of his own work and originally, the Mother and Child also had a Father!! However, for some inexplicable reason, he sliced the canvas and got rid of the dad.

A little bit about the painting: it represents a woman seated on the seashore holding a baby in her lap. The naked child leans backward, reaching his hand up toward the mother and she gazes down and into his eyes. The woman is dressed in a simple white gown reminiscent of the clothing of the ancient Romans or Greeks.

The painting, what was left of it after dad was eliminated, found its way into the Art Institute of Chicago, in whatever usual way art finds its way into galleries and museums. Some chap, a few years later, visited Picasso, I think in Paris, and took

along a catalog of the Art Institute and said, hey look, your painting is up there, isn't that cool? And Picasso said, wait a minute, and potted off to the back of his studio and emerged with the bit that he'd chopped off and said, here, you can give this to them to hang up as well!

So now, what visitors to the gallery see are three discrete pieces that comprise the Mother and Child ...

1. The mother and child
2. A description of what happened (not all of what's written above but some of it) and a proposed intersection - a line drawing, joining the two pieces with an additional prop in the form of a fish in the father's hand, which he is dangling playfully just above the child's hand.
3. The father

The Art Institute has some very insightful "liner notes" that make the experience more meaningful. Also, I was lucky to catch the tail end of a lecture that was being given to high-school students about this piece so managed to gain a little extra information.

## **Wednesday, October 8th, 2003**

Instead of hyperlinking references to the names of artists, as I said I would, here's a small selection of art.

Yes, there ought to be an index page with thumbnails, because blah, blah, yadda, yadda. OK, whatever ...

(Paintings Uploaded by Zak  
since these were not available on the original file links)

[Gogh: Self Portrait](#)  
[Gogh: Bedroom](#)  
[Lautrec: In Moulin Rouge](#)  
[Magritte: Time Transfixed](#)  
[Manet: Jesus Mocked by the Soldiers](#)  
[Manfredi: Cupid Chastised](#)  
[Picasso: Blue Guitar](#)  
[Seurat: A Sunday on La Grande Jatte](#)  
[Warhol: Mao](#)

**Monday, October 20th, 2003**

Ejaz suggested I write about this issue ...

– Begin Ejaz –

*Project Managers and Management*

*Didn't find enough time to write some more? :\$ alright, I was thinking that what is management got to do with project managers or other form of managerial posts? Coz over the couple of months, I have found them complaining about resource management, HR management and time management problems. Well if they can't MANAGE, what else have they got to do?*

*So this could be the preamble of Sabeen's next blog entry? so here we go!*

– End Ejaz –

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Hmmmm ...

Management is typically divided into a number of categories. Usually, the more hierarchy there is, the more mis-managed the business.

*b.i.t.s.* is run like a pancake - totally flat. Structures, wherever they exist, do so only to facilitate teams, make quick decisions, respond to clients, and sign cheques

Managing financial/technical resources, time, and human beings is extremely complex. Adding more and more managers to meet deadlines or achieve success or whatever one is trying to do, is not the answer. IM(not so)HO, it's about building a culture of ownership, responsibility and respect. EXTREMELY hard to do but not impossible. Of course it helps if the company is small. A Project Manager or any kind of manager needs to have emotional intelligence, common sense, an understanding of the big picture, and a burning desire to get the damn job done.

Senior management often tends to micro-manage. Very dangerous. Taking risks is extremely important. People need to be given a chance to prove themselves and if they feel trusted, they often surprise everyone, including themselves. When we started *b.i.t.s.*, we expressly decided not to hire a Project Manager. As a result, everyone learned how to manage tasks, provide feedback, work in teams, handle criticism, and face clients. Now that we've grown, we have a couple of people

handling projects, but they wear other hats too so we still don't have a "whip" standing over people, forcing them to get things done. Everyone is "conscious" and "aware" of their responsibilities.

It has been hard and arduous - getting this far. We have "managed" to do so because we are a learning organisation. So-called senior management is not afraid to admit to follies, bad decisions, or that some potentially good idea back-fired and didn't quite work as expected. We constantly review our practises, processes, and methodologies and fine-tune them based on feedback. Another thing that helps is when management puts in the same kind of hours as the rest of the team. It is an amazing way to bond and to feel connected.

Ejaz, what you are talking about is a result of management not being self-aware (my favorite word these days). It's easy to blame and point fingers and find scapegoats. Obviously the job of managers is to handle all of the things you mentioned. If those areas remain issues, then management has failed. If it also fails to introspect, the hurdles become more and more insurmountable.

More later ... *if* you want ...

## **Monday, October 20th, 2003**

Hell really hath frozen over.

Apple has released a Windows application.

iTunes!!!!

Just used it on a Wintel box and it's IDENTICAL to the Mac version. There is a bit of discrepancy in the OS controls - I guess those that are iTunes specific are Aquafied and Mac-like and those that are dependent on the Windows Toolbox, for efficiencies I imagine, are, how should one say this, uhhh - *butt ugly*. As in, those bits look like other Windows apps. For example, the Preferences panel. The tabs and buttons and sliders are from the Windows Toolbox, whereas the Equalizer uses MacOS controls. At any rate, the Windows world finally gets to use an application that has been thoughtfully designed for human beings.

And iPod owners finally get to throw away MusicMatch forever.

Well, you can put it in the Recycle Bin (which means you plan to reprocess, reuse, etc). What were the folks at Microsoft thinking (or smoking) when they were copying the MacOS's Trash?

## **Monday, November 17th, 2003**

Just installed Panther - Apple's latest upgrade to Mac OS X (V. 10.3 for the initiated) ... A few weeks ago my SuperDrive died and when Panther was released, I couldn't install it. After suffering deep depression for a few days, I grabbed a friend's Powerbook, hooked mine up to it via Firewire and seamlessly installed Panther. Everything works like a faster dream ... love Expose, Preview's speed, and other refinements to the core OS. Thank you Steve, for giving us back Labels, something you shouldn't have ever taken away in the first place, make that 149 new features ... Unsanity's ClearDock died on me, even though I installed the new Pantherized version. Have now switched to TransparentDock - which has a bunch of other nifty features ... The other thing that died - major regrets, was PTHClock, a nifty piece of freeware, hugely superior to Apple's menubar clock. Anyway, am trying FuzzyClock which says 'fuzzy' things like "five past one", "nearly two", etc.

What else is up? Going to the city just outside Pakistan, a.k.a. Islamabad, for a workshop ... The World Summit on the Information Society ... hoping fervently for engaging dialog on the use of technology in education and for the development of civil society.

Am drowning in a sea of reading material ... can't remember the feeling one used to get after finishing a book. Anyway, in my bathroom and on my bedside table are the following ... (here comes the inevitable list)

1. Branded
2. The ClueTrain Manifesto
3. Fortune - last two issues
4. Understanding Comics - The Invisible Art
5. The Scientist in the Crib
6. Take It Personally - How to Make Conscious Choices to Change the World
7. Polaroids from the Dead
8. Shampoo Planet

Have lived a lifetime over the last few weeks - my grandmother was diagnosed with cancer and between doctors, hospitals, labs, and whatnot, each day has presented a never-ending stream of emotional, physical and mental challenges.

The saga continues and life goes on ...

## **Tuesday, November 18th, 2003**

Got my first Panther Kernel Panic at 2:30 a.m. When I saw that blue screen of death, my heart nose-dived straight into my stomach and stayed there ... had a flight to Islamabad at 5:30 a.m. - so it wasn't pretty. Thanks to my non-functional CD drive (that's another story altogether), couldn't boot up with the System CD either to fiddle with the system. Tried verbose startup and diddled with some arcane Unix commands to no avail. Finally, jumped in the car, went to office, grabbed a Firewire cable, came home, mounted my laptop as an external hard disk on my mother's iBook and undid the foolishness that caused the kernel panic. If there are any Mac OS X users out there, DO NOT mess around with the damn dock. Was back in business within 10 minutes ... of course, being a Mac geek helps but much as I hate to admit it, luck was the main factor. Have had kernel panic once before, for no apparent reason ... and had to reinstall. This time, though, TransparentDock and Unsanity's APE Manager/ClearDock clashed very badly and screwed up my life.

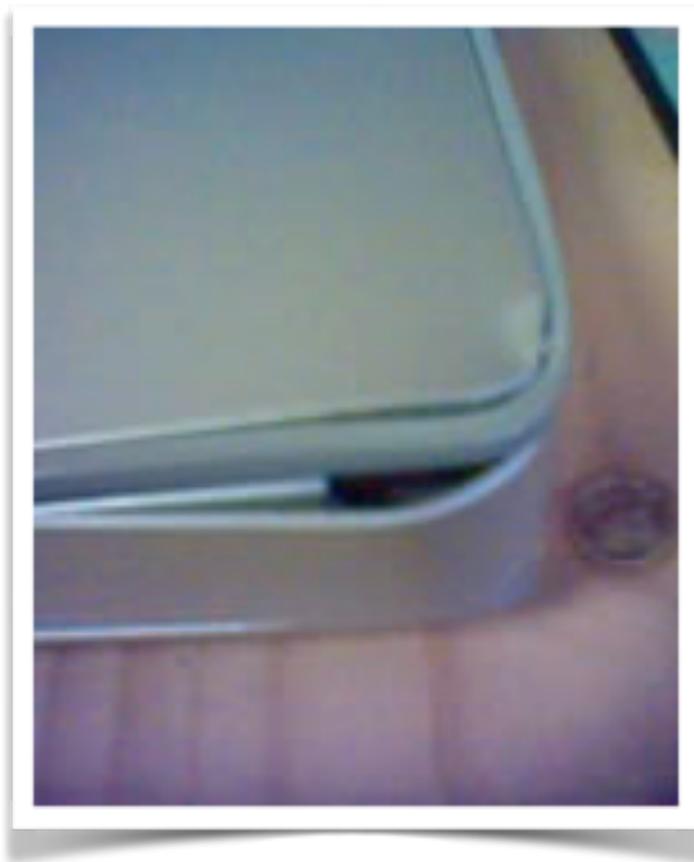
Strangely, this evening, my Sony Ericsson phone suffered from what appeared to be kernel panic - also a blue screen of death. Am I missing something here? Is it the time of year for all gadgets to single-mindedly cause grief to their owners?

Anyway ... am in glorious!Islamabad - yayaya, the weather's 'nice'. Had a full day WSIS session (I know I am terrible, I don't hyperlink) ... World Summit on the Information Society ... it was very charged up most of the day but by 3:00 mostly everyone was zoning out. Tomorrow, we will work in groups ... I will be working on ICTs for Community Development.

Ejaz, did u ever get my response to your rant about the state of web design(ers) in Pakistan? Is it bad form to ask people questions on a public blog that refer to private e-mails? If so, I am sorry but too zonked to do anything about it. Won't ever do it again though.

## **Thursday, December 11th, 2003**

My pride and joy, the love of my life, my sex bomb - slid off a desk and crashed onto the floor at 11:03 p.m. on the 10th of December, 2003. This sublime phenomenon, a.k.a. 12" Powerbook G4, now has a DENT. Its previously gorgeous right side is deformed and I am devastated.



While I have experienced deeper pain caused by innumerable crises over the years, I have never suffered through a more complex headache than the one I developed last night.

GAWD, I feel so damn sorry for myself. Anyhow, am now entering the acceptance phase - at least everything's intact and functioning correctly.

## **Tuesday, December 16th, 2003**

Pakistan Tobacco Company has embarked on a brand new campaign to save the world. Please check out this statement from their latest advert: "Pakistan Tobacco Company believes in active community service". To show its commitment to communities, PTC has begun planting trees and setting up mobile dispensary units. How can a company that produces a product designed to kill have the fucking audacity to project itself as a concerned corporation (that in itself is an oxymoron)? Oh, and they also conduct Free Diabetes Screenings and Eye Camps.

I guess one could argue that in a country like Pakistan, every inch of support is essential and shouldn't be scoffed at. Yeah, whatever ... BUT, this %^^#\$%%!!!! company's balance sheet is dependent on people buying cancer sticks and now they want to wipe some blood off their hands. Kill a few people, plant a few trees, tell a couple of misguided village folk that their blood sugar level is high and that they should stop eating all those gulab jamuns - all in a day's work. Nice!!!!

FUCK YOU!!!!!!!!!! Do whatever 'good' you have to, you lame assholes, but don't flaunt it by printing full color ads in the newspaper and telling us how much you care. These ads are an insult to our intelligence. You dared to dream?? So did we! We dream of world peace, of getting children off the streets, of an end to poverty ... you dream of making money by selling DISEASE.

What a sick, twisted, pathetic, excuse of a world we inhabit - the civilized 21st century. Hah!

## **Tuesday, December 16th, 2003**

Ejaz Asks: and how comfortable do designers feel advocating such voices (while designing such ad-campaigns)? At least we can immediately address these questions, Sabeen. Is the job of designers (traditional or new-media) only to solve visual problems? or some ethical paradigms exist and are adhered?

You've hit a raw nerve, Ejaz. In my completely not humble opinion, designers, programmers, teachers, students, ceo's, cto's, blah, blah, blah, basically EVERYONE, has a greater responsibility. Of course, every now and then, I enter the twilight zone of morality and have to make tough decisions about what's ethical and not. The twist that branding, especially lifestyle-oriented branding has taken over the last few years leaves me boggled! Cereal companies tell us to bond with our breakfast. Yeesh. How corny and altogether dumb. Anyway, one has to work to make ends meet and I have decided that I can either become a full-blown sufi or adapt ... I have decided to adapt and try and bring about change from within - i.e. try and influence corporates to do their bit.

There are certain things I know I will NEVER do, irrespective of how much money is offered. I will NEVER, EVER design/develop ANYTHING for tobacco companies, the armed forces, and militant religious groups.

**Posted by BeanZ**