



# Book Reviews

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Over the years, I have had the pleasure to read some very well-written and timely books. They have helped me in acquiring better skills, knowledge and insights into many aspects of my work and [this world around me](#). I thought it would be a good idea to condense and transfer some of the reviews from my journals to my Web site. The reviews are brief (well, most of them) and I hope others in the same line of work or line of thought will find them of value.

I have yet to acquire an interest for obtaining my knowledge from e-books or tablets. There's [something to be said about the smell and texture of paper](#) plus its portability and survival rate from gravity.

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Updated: July 2002

## Title

## Author

[Sophie's World, A Novel About the History of Philosophy](#)

Jostein Gaarder, circa 1994  
Posted May 2002

[Take Your Soul to Work](#)

Tanis Helliwell  
1999  
Posted November 2000

[Sex in the Snow - Canadian Social Values at the end of the Millennium](#)

Michael Adams  
1999  
Posted December 2000

[Working with Emotional Intelligence](#)

Daniel Goleman  
1999  
Posted April 2001

[Faster - The Acceleration of Just About Everything](#)

James Gleick  
1999

[Weaving the Web](#)

Tim Berners-Lee  
with Mark Fischetti  
1998/1999  
Posted April 2001

[The Invisible Computer: Why good products can fail, the personal computer is so complex, and information appliances are the solution.](#)

Donald Norman  
2000  
Posted April 2001

[Designing Web Usability](#)

Jakob Nielsen  
2000  
Posted November 2000

[The Social Life of Information](#)

John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid  
2000  
Posted April 2001

[Fierce.com](#)  
[the exclusive book for web elitists](#)

Tor Hyams and David Scharff with Matt Hyams  
1999  
Posted April 2001

[Better Happy Than Rich?:  
Canadians, Money and the Meaning of Life](#)

Michael Adams  
2000  
Posted June 2001

[No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies](#)

Naomi Klein  
2000  
Posted August 2001

[Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper](#)

Nicholson Baker  
2001  
Posted October 2001

[Great Expectations](#)  
(a comparison of the classic story with the modernized movie version)

Charles Dickens  
Posted October 2001

[Homepage Usability - 50 Websites Deconstructed](#)

Jakob Nielsen and Marie Tahir  
2001  
Posted January 2002

[Good News for a Change -  
Hope for a Troubled Planet](#)

By David Suzuki and Holly Dressel  
2002  
Posted June 2002

**The Elixir and the Stone - Unlocking the Ancient Mysteries of the Occult**

By Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh  
1998 Penguin paperback  
Posted July 2002

It's not as dark and twisted as the title may sound. The [review is in PDF format](#).

See also [my weltanschauung page](#).

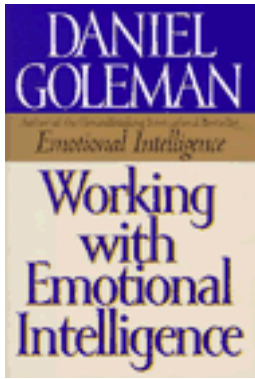
I also conjured up a [word search puzzle](#) for the inquisitive types. Do you dare attempt to solve it?

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[Top of page](#) | [Home: www.jobateh.ca/web](http://www.jobateh.ca/web)  
Theresa Jobateh

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## Working with Emotional Intelligence



For more information on this book and Daniel Goleman, please visit: [www.eiconsortium.org/members/goleman.htm](http://www.eiconsortium.org/members/goleman.htm)

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Business or career success is not always a result of IQ, it depends mostly on EQ - Emotional Quotient.

Your success depends not just on what you know, who you know and how well you did in school. It depends on how you put all the above together, handle challenges and conduct yourself in stressful, demanding situations.

Theresa Jobateh  
Posted: November 2000

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## Faster - The acceleration of Just About Everything



For more information on this book and James Gleick, please visit: <http://fasterbook.com>

[~ Return to Reviews ~](#)

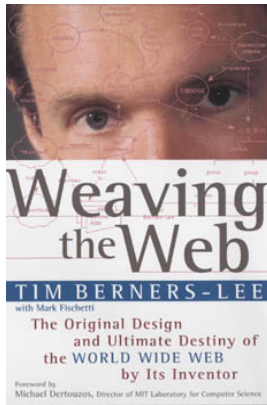
Our modern technologies give us the ability to produce work at greater speeds. As Gleick puts it, *"For so many people and businesses, speed is connectivity. The state of being connected makes them more efficient - maybe even more nimble. Sadly, it also makes them feel busier - maybe even overloaded."*

What did this book help me understand? It helped me understand and be able to state that "I am my own ticker control board". For example, I do not have to respond immediately to each and every Email I receive. Let it sit for a while. Take time to reflect on its meaning and my response depending on its importance and impact on my life at this moment.

Theresa Jobateh  
Posted: November 2000

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## Weaving the Web



For more information on this book and Tim Berners-Lee, please visit: [www.w3c.org/People/Berners-Lee](http://www.w3c.org/People/Berners-Lee)

[~ Return to Reviews ~](#)

A good chronological tale of how the concept of the World Wide Web started, the resistance or "disinterest" Tim encountered and then the sudden, explosive growth.

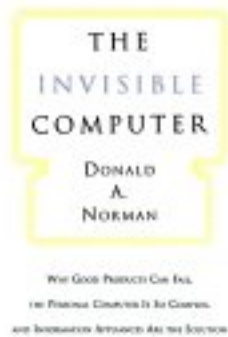
It's a story about connections, not only between computers and networks, but between human minds, ideas and common goals.

A very good read.

Theresa Jobateh  
Posted: November 2000

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## The Invisible Computer: Why good products can fail, the personal computer is so complex, and information appliances are the solution.



For more information on this book and Donald Norman, please visit: <http://www.jnd.org>

[~ Return to Reviews ~](#)

As usual, with Mr. Norman's books, I enjoyed his writing style and efforts to give as much explanation as possible to help us "lay people" understand.

The gist of this book is "big tech business has to get out of this PC hardware / software development cycle of complexity and accept the emerging information appliances with their promise of simplicity and universal compatibility". Which translates to "Make computers safer and easier to use while allowing for seamless connectivity with other devices".

To me, computers are supposed to be tools. We are the master, not the computer, not the software developers. Get it right guys and don't rush the next release before all the bugs and security holes are caught. After connecting to your site for two hours, why can't I apply the "critical update" to my office suite when I darned-well DO have the required file and installation CD?

From a technical/user support perspective, I can appreciate what Mr. Norman is saying about the complexity of software. It becomes rather [stressful maintaining, trouble-shooting software](#) and consoling irate users. From a user, home-based business perspective, I understand so much the annoyance at having to upgrade software every six months - and, oh yes, updating my \$support \$subscription. How many times should one update their FTP software if all they do is PUT and GET files?

As a welcomed diversion, I enjoyed his sections on communications media and their affordances and that of the photographic vs. drawing

experiences during a trip to the Yellow Mountains in China.

*"It took a while before I understood. A camera is an intrusive technology, one that gets in the way of the act. Drawing, on the other hand, is an enhancing technology, one that by its nature requires concentration, focus and reflection upon the event being drawn.*

*To sketch a scene requires a deep analysis of the experience, to savor it, to relish it, to reflect upon it. It is this act of reflection that is critical: Once the picture is drawn, the deed is done and the picture itself could be discarded, for the mental appreciation will last forever.*

*Indeed, years after the event, those who photographed it may barely remember, whereas those who drew it will have an enhanced appreciation with more vivid memories. Perhaps their appreciation will have been distorted by the vagaries of human memory to be even larger than life, more fulfilling than the reality. But why not? Why not savor life's experiences with even greater satisfaction over time?"*

And, in closing, Donald Normans' person-centered motto:  
*People propose, Science studies, Technology conforms.*

Theresa Jobateh

Posted: November 2000, updated May 2002

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## The Social Life of Information

John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid  
2000, Harvard Business School Press

For more information on this book and its authors, please visit:  
<http://www.slofi.com>

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I found this book informative and enlightening while confirming some of my own ponderings and assumptions about physical / written information and that in the electronic form.

At times though, I found the thread of thought and ideas a little beyond my mental or cognitive capacity. No wonder, as these guys are scholars, researchers and academics. I had to re-read some sections in order to at least grasp the general sense of their findings. It was worth the time and I say that because I renewed the book once at the OPL (Ottawa Public Library) but was refused a second renewal. Therefore, dedicating my time to this book was well worth it - at least \$4.00 in overdue fees!

### Some choice passages or ideas:

Pgs 53-54

Re: bots (delegates, electronic agents):

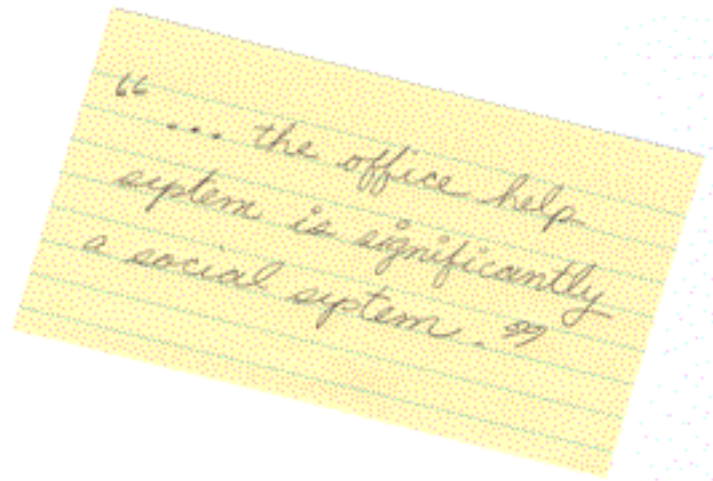
"Judgement and discretions are not features of software. They are products of human socialization and experience. As the political advisor Michael Oakeshott has argued, they are learned not by the acquisition of facts and rules, but through social relations and participation in human activities. As Mark Humphrys of the School of Computer Applications, Dublin University, points out, even if bots could learn like humans, they lack the rich stimuli that humans depend on to develop such things as judgement. Bots, in contrast to humans, live a wretchedly impoverished social existence."

## Chapter 3 Pg 63

"Home Alone" working from home:

- Proved to have disadvantages not only because of technical problems and frustrations but also due to the lack of incidental learning and shared knowledge.

"One study of a telecenter found that 25 percent of the participants gave up within the first five months, and 50 percent within a year."



"... the office help system is significantly a social system."

## Pages 78-79

"... Once again we see that the office help system is significantly a social system. It is also something that home office workers don't have. But instead of trying to overcome this deficit, futurists and technologists instead lead people to believe that they don't need to rely on social systems and would be better without them.

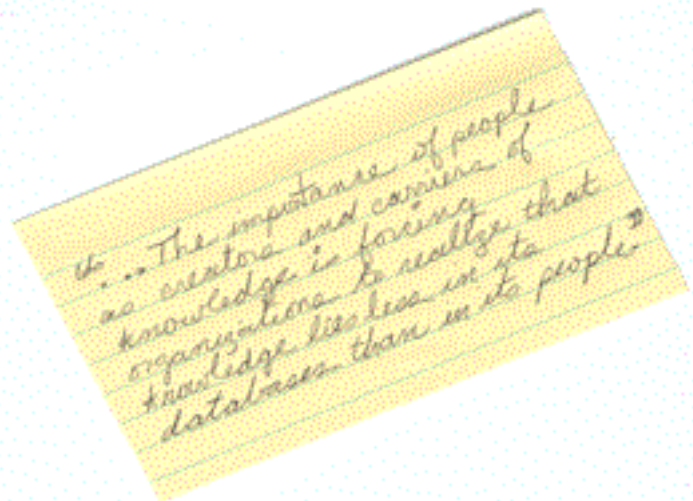
'Put a computer in people's homes,' Toffler insists, 'and they no longer need to huddle,' as if huddling were always a waste. But it isn't. It's often a way of getting things done through collaboration. At home with frail and fickle technologies and unlimited configurations, people paradoxically may need to huddle even more, but can't.

... These cumulative problems may lead to the curious paradox that information technology, by ignoring the role played invisibly by the social system, is keeping people out of the home and in the conventional office, and not the other way around."

Pg 121 on Knowledge and the Knowledge economy:

"...Investment is no longer drawn, as post-industrial champions like to point out, to bricks and mortar and other forms of fixed capital. Nor does it pursue income streams... Instead, investors see value in people and their know-how - people with the ability to envisage and execute adventurous new business plans and to keep re-envisaging these to stay ahead of the competition.

... The importance of people as creators and carriers of knowledge is forcing organization to realize that knowledge lies less in its databases than in its people. It's been said, for example, that if NASA wanted to go to the moon again, it would have to start from scratch, having lost not the data, but the human expertise that took it there the last time. "



"... The importance of people as creators and carriers of knowledge is forcing organizations to realize that knowledge lies less in its databases than in its people."

## Chapter 5, Pg 128

Learning - in Theory and in Practice: To be or not to be:

"... The critical words here, however, are ABOUT and BECOME. They point to a distinction made by Jerome Bruner, a professor of psychology at New York University, between LEARNING ABOUT and LEARNING TO BE. Certainly, most of anyone's knowledge might best be described as knowledge 'about'. Many people learn ABOUT a lot of things - astrophysics, ... Madagascar lemurs...

... Learning TO BE requires more than just information. It requires the ability to engage in the practice in question. Indeed, Bruner's distinction highlights another, made by the philosopher Gilbert Ryle. He distinguishes KNOW THAT from KNOW HOW. Learning about involves the accumulation of 'know that': principally data, facts or information. Learning about does not, however, produce the ability to put 'know that' into use...

'We learn how,' Ryle argues, 'by practice'. And similarly, through practice, we learn TO BE."

## Chapter 7 Pg 181

### Reading the Background Sticking around (Paper)

... Paper documents have proved more resistant than many of their antagonists (or defenders) expected. Paper is not, moreover, simply hanging on. New avenues for paper documents continue to develop, while its resourcefulness and complementary properties, though previously dismissed, are now becoming an asset for digital technologies."

- Rise of Fax, ability to mix manuscript and typescript. Annotations and circulation.
- Paper phenomenon: Post-it (TM) helps annotate
- Ebooks - not books really but 'tablets'

Documents help structure society, enabling social groups to form, develop and maintain a sense of shared identity.

- Newsletters, e-zines, academic papers
- Documents provide 'networking' functions

On Virtual colleges:

Although focused on one subject of discipline, does not provide accidental learning and interaction as one would encounter on a college campus. Peer support, apprenticeship.

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Again, some of the wording and terminology used in this book were a 'little' above my challenged intellect. Regardless, I enjoyed reading and learning what I could digest and understand. Learning about, learning TO BE...

Read: December 2000 - January 2001

Posted: April 2001

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## Fierce.com the exclusive book for web elitists

Tor Hyams and David Scharff with Matt Hyams  
Published 1999 by Four Walls Eight Windows / Turnaround

For more information on this book and its authors, please visit:

<http://www.fierce.com>

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*elite: the choice or select part of a group, as of a society*  
(Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language)

I tripped upon this book at the OPL while searching for a more serious and reserved publication titled "The Tangled Web". I couldn't find my book of choice but chanced upon this in the process of combing through the disarranged shelves. At first I was repelled by the image on the cover. Heeding the wise words of my elders, I did what I usually do if the cover looks doubtful; I flipped it over to read the reviews on the back. Since it dealt with the World Wide Web and the variety of content out there, I thought it would be a good resource for my own on-going research.

## Here goes:

This is a book by two cynical young men with too much time on their hands to surf the Web let alone write about their discoveries. (Don't they work? Where do they get the money for this?)

This is a book based on a Web site created by these same young men, a Web site where they post reviews of sites on the WWW based on criteria they have defined. There's Fierce, Unfierce, Useful, Not Quite and ... Erotic. I could have done it with only three categories with a clever use of the overly used acronym, WWW: Wholesome, Whimsical and Weird.

My own criticisms aside, it is both interesting and disturbing that there are thousands upon thousands of Web sites out there covering subjects that are either useful or wasteful. (There, I've narrowed it down to two categories)

I enjoyed their writing style and wit but at times was not sure which one was writing the review unless of course, there were allusions to sexual preferences. There were also the "Alleged" sections splattered between most chapters in which they persist in their paranoia that the CIA pursues them. (They wish)

I enjoyed their sense of humour in their reviews to some degree minus the " \_ \_ \_ your sister, Funny". I don't get it either and I don't think it was necessary. It wasn't necessary for me to even give it coverage either.

I was deeply offended in the chapter about "so-called experts" Web sites. They lambasted Jakob Nielsen along with other experts and their "lame e-zines". Hey, guys! Lay off. That hurt. Jakob is as close to an "idol" as I'll ever have. He is the essence of structured, organized geekness. He helped instil the mantra "Content is King".

My disdain was softened when I came upon the "Artsy" chapter with reviews of some sites done by people with a lot of talent, creativity and plenty of time on their hands. Again I ask, "Where do these people get the money to develop and host their sites?"

Lastly, we are advised by the authors to consider the alternative to surfing the Web for endless hours - watch more TV. Now, if that were me after revealing to the world my fears, preferences and desires, I would have suggested a trip to the Library or bookstore. But then again, who knows what you're going to trip upon while scanning the shelves...

Read: March - April 2001

Posted: April 2001

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## Huntsville Forester, March 13, 1985



Mary Ruth \_\_\_\_\_ Shelley \_\_\_\_\_ and Theresa \_\_\_\_\_ have been working at the Huntsville Public Library as part of the provincial

government's Youth Corps winter employment program. The trio will be at the library until the end of this month.

### Youth work project at public library

(Names altered to protect others' privacy T.J.)

There have been three new faces at the Huntsville Public Library these past weeks, thanks to the provincial government's "Youth Corps" winter employment program.

\_\_\_\_\_ weeks. Mary Ruth \_\_\_\_\_ Theresa \_\_\_\_\_ and Shelley \_\_\_\_\_ have been performing a wide variety of tasks at the library. The trio will be working at the library

month.

The Youth Corps project is a part of the Ontario Youth Opportunities special winter youth employment program.

Ministry of Culture and Citizenship.

The Ministry has provided 62.5 per cent of the funding for the employment program, while the

## Huntsville Public Library - Work term 1985

rewarding, fulfilling work experiences I had as a youth. It reinforced my love of books, my respect for the [knowledge they provide](#) and respect for the Public Library as a valuable resource.

T. Jobateh. [Home - www.jobateh.ca/web](http://www.jobateh.ca/web)

# Sophie's World, A Novel About the History of Philosophy

## by Jostein Gaarder

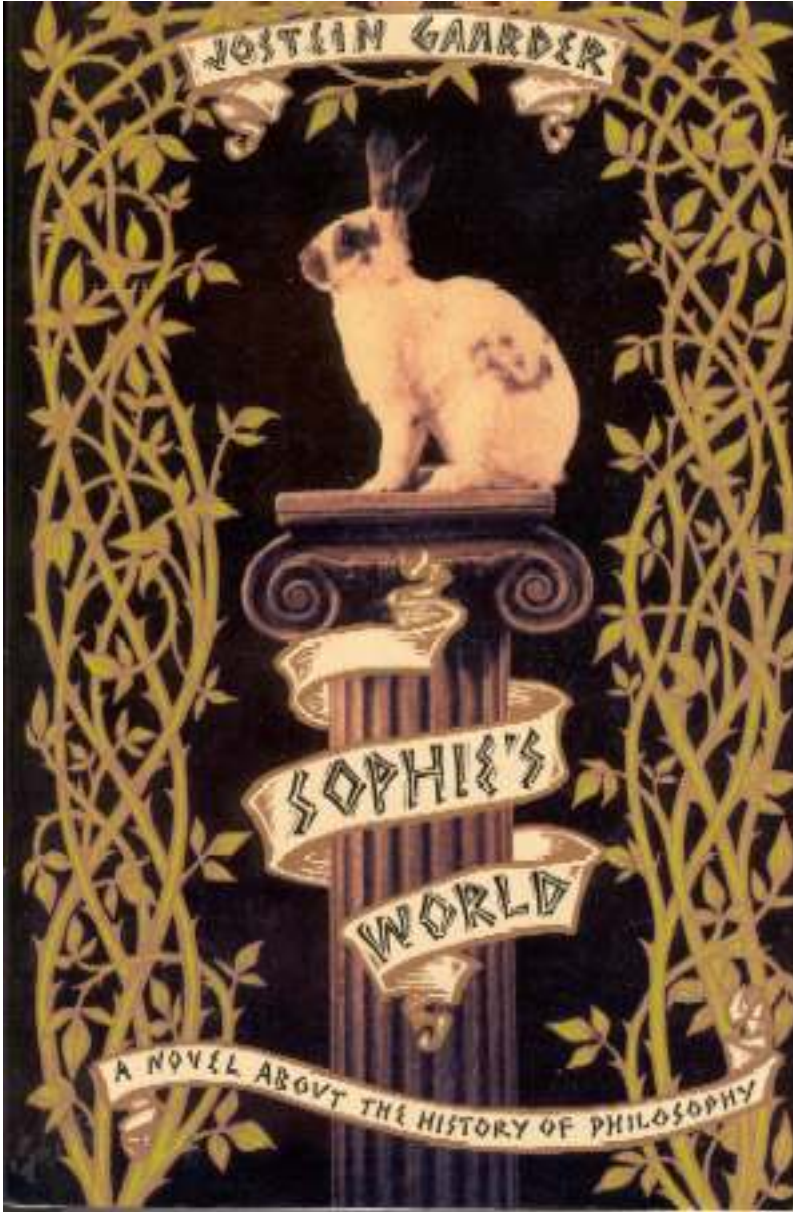
"A lot of people experience the world with the same incredulity as when a magician suddenly pulls a rabbit out of a hat which has just been shown to them empty.

In the case of the rabbit, we know the magician has tricked us. What we would like to know is just how he did it." ...

"Actually, we are the white rabbit being pulled out of the hat. The only difference between us and the white rabbit is that the rabbit does not realize it is taking part in a magic trick. Unlike us. We feel we are part of something mysterious and we would like to know how it all works."

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This novel is an excellent example of the story within the story, eventually leaving the reader slightly confused but pondering the interpretations of the subject about which Gaarder is writing: our existence (and how us who-mins have tried figuring it out). To me, this book is an excellent novel and lesson in Philosophy. I plan to read it again and again over the years as well as pass it down to my children. As Jostein Gaarder states in the news clipping below, it's not just for kids; it's for people of all ages.



Saaaay... would you like to see a pen and ink drawing I did around 1983, waaay before I had even heard of Jostein Gaarder or "Sophie's World"? It's a whimsical piece called "[Revenge of the Bunny](#)". *The bunny managed to do away with the magician and seems to be basking in adoration and applause until...*

Keep on asking questions and don't lose that [sense of wonder](#)!

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This appeared in a local newspaper shortly after I started reading the book...

you doing  
the great outdoors.

## Author finds world of awe

TORONTO (CP) — Looking into Jostein Gaarder's twinkling brown eyes, it's easy to believe the best-selling Norwegian author when he says he greets each morning with wonder.

"Every day every day every day ev-er-y day I feel amazed by existence, by life," says the former professor in heavily accented English.

His delight, however, is tempered by the knowledge that life is short, and as he greets the world he also says goodbye to it.

"I'll never ever come back here," he says, "and I feel sorry about that. I feel grief, yes, really, because I love to live. Maybe that's why I write."

Like the author who creates them, the characters in Gaarder's books — *The Solitaire Mystery*, *Sophie's World* and *The Christmas Mystery* — come to be amazed at the fantastic and enigmatic world they live in.

Most of Gaarder's books are about and for teenagers, although he broke the mould with *Sophie's World*, a book about the history of philosophy, which he was afraid would "fall between the stools," that is, not fit in anywhere.

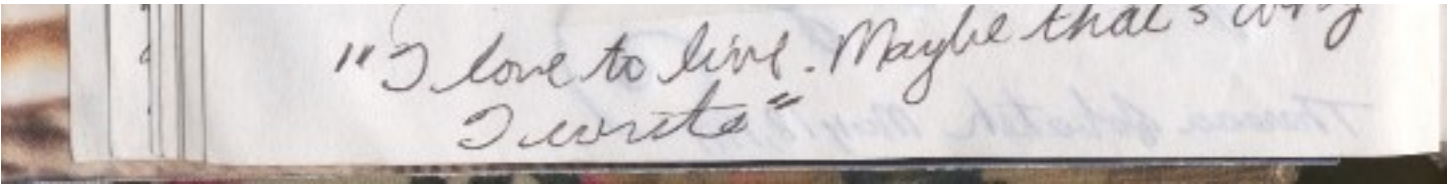
"It's neither a book for young adults, nor a book for adults. It's neither a real fiction book nor a textbook. But it didn't fall between the stools, but all over different stools, in a way."

*Sophie's World* became a phenomenon.

It has now been translated into 43 languages, and was the best-selling book in the world in 1995.

Offen Sun July 6, 1997





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# The Philosopher Bunny

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# Good News for a Change - Hope for a Troubled Planet



By David Suzuki and Holly Dressel  
2002 Stoddart Publishing Co. Ltd.

For more information on this book visit [www.stoddartpub.com](http://www.stoddartpub.com)

For more information on the David Suzuki Foundation, please visit:  
[www.davidsuzuki.org](http://www.davidsuzuki.org)

## Related links. a-z:

- Canadian Museum of Nature - [www.nature.ca](http://www.nature.ca)
- CBC, The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation - [www.cbc.ca](http://www.cbc.ca)
- David Suzuki Foundation - [www.davidsuzuki.org](http://www.davidsuzuki.org)
- Ottawa International Writers Festival - [www.writersfest.com](http://www.writersfest.com)
- Place Bell Books - <http://cyberus.ca/~pbb/main.html>
- Stoddart Publishing Co. Ltd. - [www.stoddartpub.com](http://www.stoddartpub.com)
- The Ottawa Citizen - [www.ottawacitizen.com](http://www.ottawacitizen.com)

The book was printed "using vegetable based inks on acid-free, 100% old forest growth free paper, which is 100% post-consumer recycled, and processed chlorine free." It was printed and bound in Canada.

Book cover image used with permission from Stoddart Publishing Co. Ltd.

This review is also an interesting combination of events. It tells how I learned about this book and the experiences leading up to and after reading it. I hope you will enjoy it and help spread the news.

The Review | [The Discovery](#) | [The Experience](#)

## The Review

I really enjoyed "Good News for a Change - Hope for a Troubled Planet". Of course, I would. I did although there were some lengthy explanations of scientific findings in environmental problems and subsequent solutions. Maybe those parts seemed lengthy because I would read it just before bedtime or on the workday commute into and out of the city of Ottawa.

[My favourite passages](#) were those called "Making Money like the Bee" and "Wrestling with Pluto". I have felt for a long time that businesses should be [conscious of the environment](#), ensuring not to harm nature in their processes. It was a good sign that *certified* organic products were becoming more and more popular in the grocery stores. I also felt that there were many harmful substances being dragged from the underworld; if not harmful to the health, more harmful than beneficial to societies with the greed of a few power mongers (i.e. gold and gemstones and oil).

Instead of the old "doom and gloom" approach, this book gives numerous examples of solutions being applied now by local communities, municipal governments and the lawmakers of some European countries. The authors tell of city dwellers in Europe that do their best to conserve water and reduce household waste by composting. They even provide examples of what can be done using natural, harmless, long-term methods. They encourage us to appreciate and respect the rituals and beliefs of indigenous peoples, the original caretakers of the land and water. One could conclude that some of the ancient rituals that they used had a good purpose and should not have been discarded so easily in the name of modern agricultural methods.

After reading this book, I feel more justified in questioning humanity's responsibility if our "advanced" societies trample down upon the natural world while placing themselves at such lofty heights. What is our unsettling obsession with speed, power and material worth? Where are we going so fast and with whom are we racing?

## My Favourite Passages

"The similarity in myths associated with the underworld across so many cultures implies that somehow we've always known it was dangerous and unnatural to go underground and steal from Pluto. But now we know exactly why that's true, and having the coal mine cave in on us or the gas vein explode is the very least of our problems. We are gradually learning that minerals, oils and gases that were sequestered beneath the surface of the earth by biology, geology and time actually have a reason for staying where they are. If they don't, they risk changing the make-up of everything on the planet's surface, including the atmosphere that protects the whole thing." (Wrestling with Pluto, page 277)

"A lot of people go public and expand their businesses away from this local ideal and become unwieldy corporations, Wicks explains, simply because they get bored. They have other interests they want to pursue, and they decide to compartmentalize their business, so it will provide the money to enable them to realize their other life goals, like collecting old books or race cars, or even, say, helping inner-city children. 'Rather than starting another restaurant when I got bored,' she says, 'I just went deeper into what I had. I started doing these programs because they were issues that interested me. And I discovered that I really could address every single subject I was interested in, through my business.'" (Judy Wicks, White Dog Café. Making Money like the Bee, page 15)

"It's a rare company founder who is able to hold on to a truly controlling share of the stock in their own creation. And the newcomers very often vote the founder out, simply because what they have invested in the business is not their time, passion or ideals, but their money, and that's the only thing they want out of it. In fact, under current corporate law, a business corporation is not allowed to use its assets for anything that cannot be proven to make it more money." (Making Money like the Bee, page 47)

"Modern money is only a number on a piece of paper or an electronic trace in a computer, that by social convention gives its holder a claim on that real wealth. In our confusion, we've concentrated on the money, to the neglect of those things that actually sustain a good life". (Withdrawing Consent, page 60)

"...One of the most important indicators of economic health is the presence of an active economy of affection and reciprocity, in which people do a great many useful things for one another with no expectation of financial gain. Anyone who has ever spent time in poorer countries, in rural areas or in small towns knows exactly what this means." (Withdrawing Consent, page 60)

Finally, the back of the book lists numerous resources and organizations one could contact and be a part of in the efforts to protect and preserve our beautiful, wonderful world. I highly recommend you purchase a copy of this book today at your local Independent Bookseller.

Theresa Jobateh  
Posted: June 2002

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## The Discovery

I had not heard about the release of David Suzuki's new book. What kind of world was I engrossed in that I was not aware of this? Well, in the past few years, I had greatly reduced my TV watching time and preferred more to listen to the radio. I had also been a little distracted with family and work. It is important to mention that we are already conscientious consumers in reducing the amount of waste we generate. We re-circulate clothing and toys or donate them to charity. We participate in the recycling program in our community. Although I was already a subscriber to the newsletters, I had not even heard about the book reading event from the Foundation. Tsk, tsk!



Enter my six-legged mascot... On March 23rd, after reading in one local newspaper about the recent emergence of sleepy ladybugs, I went nibbling for more information on the Web. I went first to the Museum of Nature's Web site hoping they would have some information I could refer to and link to from my little [hobby site about Ladybugs](#). I was looking for information from a Canadian source to support the role of the ladybug (or ladybeetle) as a natural solution in ridding pests from gardens and farmers' fields. My eldest son had recently received an A+ on a [fairy tale](#) he wrote on this topic (with a little help) for his grade six Language Arts class in February.

Right there on the home page of the [Canadian Museum of Nature](#) I saw a picture of David Suzuki, an enduring figure in the quest to protect nature and the environment. I saw the heading "Book Reading". Whoa! Then I saw a picture of the cover of his recent book "Good News for a Change - Hope for a Troubled Planet" which he co-authored with Holly Dressel. Double Whoa!

I immediately printed off the page (double-sided - tree hugger), and did some research on where to purchase the book and tickets to the event as well as working out costs for transportation and meals for the whole fam-damilly. I wanted to take everyone even if it meant digging into my humble savings. I wanted to share an experience with my husband and children and wanted them to see, hear and perhaps speak with one of the

heroes from my youth.

There was a problem. The event was to happen on a Tuesday evening, a school night. My husband, the self-appointed responsible one, explained to me that the kids had homework to do during the week and we could not neglect their education. My non-verbalized reaction was, "Screw the homework! This is an experience of a lifetime!" Well, finally he convinced me (after some pouting and rolling of eyes on my part) and suggested I could plan to go on my own if I wanted to experience it so much.

So I did. That Monday on my lunch hour I walked eight or ten blocks to Place Bell Books, one of the [Ottawa Independent Booksellers](#) and purchased my very own copy of the book and ticket to the event. I felt like a kid again and it was to be my night out.

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## The Experience

On the Tuesday afternoon, the Ottawa region started receiving quite a bit of snow. This was March 26th remember. The previous week had been up to the twenties Celsius. We were getting what seemed to be more snowfall than we did in December. The airports were delaying flights. Roads were being closed. At 4:30 PM I panicked and called the museum to confirm the event was still happening. A pleasant sounding lady assured me that it was still "a go".

At 5:30 PM, I started walking from the office over to Metcalfe Street. As I made my way down I felt as if I was in a dreamland. The snow was quite a few inches deep and drifting down in large, fluffy flakes. "This is what December should have looked like", I said to myself. I gazed around at all the old brick and stone buildings along Metcalfe Street as I headed south. I met up with many people who were out walking their dogs and even patted a few on the head (*the dogs, not their masters*). Isn't it interesting how one will start up a conversation with other human beings if they are walking a pet but not always if they pass each other otherwise?

I felt like a child on a little adventure and I was heading for the magnificent castle at the end of the road. I'm sure many of you who have visited the Museum of Nature as children have pretended it was a castle at some point in your own imaginations. I felt as I used to when I was about eleven or twelve. I wasn't in a hurry but I was feeling a great sense of anticipation and wonder.

Safe, rosie-cheeked and covered with snow, I arrived at the museum castle. As I entered through the large, stained-glass entrance and dusted myself off, I was surprised to see so many people already in line! Immediately I got into the nearest lineup and organized myself by peeling off my coat, gloves and other winter accessories.

After quite a few minutes of exchanging pleasantries with others in line and reading from the books' introduction, I saw a young man approach to ask if we had our tickets in advance and that we could go to the other line. Well, yes! Apparently, I was in the line for purchasing tickets! Quickly and gleefully I skittered over to the other line that got to enter into the auditorium and choose a suitable seat.

It did not take very long for the auditorium to fill. There was a sense of excitement and anticipation in the air. I became involved in conversations around me about other endeavours; one to save the oceans; another by a young student who was gathering signatures on a petition for the environment - that she herself had started. We discussed our preferences and opinions of the various environmental organizations.

Finally, there were introductions by the leading members of the Ottawa International Writers Festival, who were presenting the event. First we would hear Dr. Suzuki read from his book, then we would be able to hear and ask questions of a panel consisting of Suzuki and two local media personalities.

When he was introduced, I was thrilled. Right there, standing on the stage was David Suzuki! He said hello, thanked everyone for coming in this weather and started reading from his book. He would stop and make comments related to the topic he just read. I heard and savoured the voice that I admired and respected since I was a youth. It was euphoric.

The rest was a blur. There was an intermission, and then the panel sat, talked and entertained questions from the audience. There were many questions and some incomplete answers from panel members. I remember the one audience member who posed the questions of 1) how do I take legal action against a business up the road that is dumping and polluting the water table that I share; 2) When we as consumers purchase a product, who makes sure the producer of the product will be responsible for taking it back when it has reached it's lifetime of use? Yea! Yea!

Afterwards, most of us lined up to get David Suzuki to autograph the new book and some, previous books as well! I was hungry and weak so I dug into my backpack for a Nutrigrain bar. The line snaked its way slowly throughout the foyer of the museum. I wrote the names of my husband and children on the back of the program so he could just copy them when the time came. Finally, there I was in front of him hearing his voice say "and whom shall I make this to?" I nervously placed the program on top of the page of the book where he planned to sign. He copied the names of my husband and children plus added, "Spread the news" and his signature. I think I said thank you and continued on. The line of other tired visitors was pressing forward.

I kept moving and was pulled over to the table of the [Ottawa International Writers Festival](#). Proceeds from this event were going towards the festival and they were signing up new members. In my euphoric state, I announced shyly that I was an [amateur writer and poet](#). They were happy to oblige when I agreed that I would like to sign up. Then I embarrassedly asked if I could post-date the cheque. Of course they said. What an

interesting turn of events - or a wonderful blend of related interests and desires!

I applied the layers of coverage for the winter wonderland waiting for me outdoors. Slowly I made my way over to Bank Street to catch a bus up to one of the connecting points to make my way home to my family. I felt fulfilled and inspired. I looked forward to reading the book even more after my experience.

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## The Affirmation

In early March 2002, I had received written communication from an organization of which I had been a part for a long, long time. The document announced my many years of service and that I would be rewarded by a generous reimbursement for the purchase of a personal item such as jewelry or art.

Well, first of all, I tend to lose jewelry and scoff at the expensive kind. Second, I consider myself an [evolving artist](#) so why would I want to purchase *someone else's work* to hang on my walls or clutter my very limited space in this world?



In early April I had a wonderful idea. Why not use this generous gift to pass on to a cause that would work hard to protect and preserve our beautiful planet? This would be very personal to me at the same time as part of a legacy to share with my loved ones, especially my children in providing hope for the future. The good news is that my choice of service award was approved by the organization.

When I received the receipt and a typed letter with thanks signed by David Suzuki (!) included was a handwritten note from Suzuki himself! I was very touched that he had taken the time to do this.

In June 2002 I finally convinced my husband that we should try a backyard composting unit. Before he could change his mind, I went to Canadian Tire, purchased the last **Garden Gourmet** and assembled it shortly after on my day off. In addition to efficient use of resources and diligently recycling, I am looking forward to reducing our kitchen garbage by 25% AND creating some nourishment for my husband's flowers.

These are small steps by one person (and loved ones) in helping to "Spread the news".



Theresa Jobateh  
Posted: June 2002

Update: July 2002 - This article / review was picked up by The Green Pages. [www.thegreenpages.ca](http://www.thegreenpages.ca)

Update: October 2002 - Airing on CBC Television is a series based on David Suzuki's book "The Sacred Balance". Visit the Web site for more interactive information. [www.sacredbalance.com](http://www.sacredbalance.com), David Suzuki's vision of humanity's place in nature.

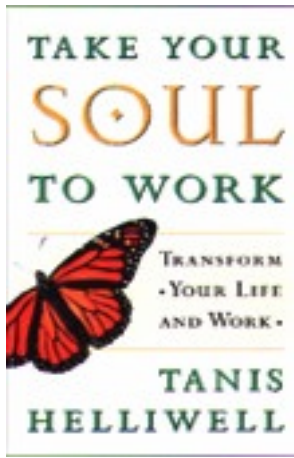
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# Take Your Soul to Work



For more information on this book and Tanis Helliwell, please visit:  
<http://www.tanishelliwell.com>

Have you ever had an employer, a job or contract that didn't feel quite right or made you uneasy? Have you ever had one that gave you a feeling of pride and fulfillment all the way through to completion?

I would like to introduce you to a book that I obtained almost two years ago. It is called "Take Your Soul to Work" by Tanis Helliwell.

Okay, okay. Don't go thinking I'm leading you into some religious thing here! Although the book touches often upon the subject of spirituality, I believe it has much merit and provides guidance for people in choosing and staying with certain lines of work - or certain employers.

It's not just about how the type of job or career affects the individual but also how it can affect a work team, community and [businesses world-wide](#). It's about how you let your "personality" and your "soul" work together in letting you achieve wellness and success. If more people paid heed to these teachings, perhaps the world would be a healthier, happier place.

As Tanis puts it, *"This book is dedicated to all people who are committed to creating a healthy world"*

I highly recommend it. This much-valued book has a place of honour as a reference in my *humble* home office bookshelf. It is rewarding to see how far I have come since beginning this journey myself.

Theresa Jobateh  
Posted: November 2000

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# No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies



Naomi Klein, 2000  
ISBN: 0-676-97282-9  
Published by Vintage Canada, A division of Random House of Canada Ltd.  
[www.randomhouse.ca](http://www.randomhouse.ca)

For more information on this book and Naomi Klein, please visit:  
[www.nologo.org](http://www.nologo.org)

This book was referred to in "[Better Happy Than Rich? Canadians, Money and the Meaning of Life](#)". After reading *No Logo* though, I'm not so sure how deeply involved I would want to get in the advertising realm ! At least I'd know what [types of companies with whom NOT to become involved](#). As usual, and in my own naïve mantra I would aim to "use my skills and powers for good".

As I read this book, I encountered feelings of amazement and disgust. I was aware that companies spend a lot of money on advertising but was amazed to learn that big corporations have also been dedicating more of their budgets to "cool hunting" research and "branding". I was disgusted as I learned more about with the methods they used to produce their goods at cheaper costs or control governments so they could have rights and easy access to their natural resources.

In a few examples of the garment industry, Ms. Klein states that the generous amounts of money corporations put towards their "branding" efforts was taken from the wages of North American workers. In most cases, the jobs were not cut but "moved" to developing countries. The companies did not own factories in the Export Processing Zones of these countries but "contracted" out to the factory owners.

Since the factory owners were competing amongst themselves for the big corporations' business, they would make cuts of their own. Most of the time the cuts were to workers' wages, benefits and safe accommodations.

Since the big corporations did not own these factories, they felt justified to distance themselves from any human rights or workers' union issues.

These big brand names and the corporations behind them have been the symbol of international labour and human rights abuses. Ironically, their intentions of making their brands well known have come and shone the light right back at them. Their efforts in making their brands so well known have come full circle and pulled the spotlight to reveal their blemishes, exposing their greed and dishonest practices.

Thankfully, for the workers there are educated and conscientious individuals who have banded together and come to their aid. They have also made efforts to bring awareness of these injustices to governments, universities and the general public both here and abroad. These dedicated people are the worker aid center activists, the ad busters, culture jammers and human rights activists.

I thank Naomi Klein for having the courage and patience to write this book. I encourage others, especially our youth, to read it and become more aware of the deceptive advertising methods and business practices of *some* companies around us.

If you want more information on the book or you want to become better informed, follow this link to [www.nologo.org](http://www.nologo.org).

Theresa Jobateh  
Posted: August 2001

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# Better Happy Than Rich?: Canadians, Money and the Meaning of Life



(The goose was my idea, it's not on the book)

By Michael Adams  
VIKING. Published by the Penguin Group. 2000

For more information on this book and Michael Adams, please visit:  
<http://erg.environics.net/>

I came across this book title in a flyer that was advertising some 2001 marketing strategy conference in Toronto this coming fall.

Since I had read Mr. Adams' book [Sex in the Snow](#) last year, I felt compelled to read this follow-up. It was of interest to me for three reasons:

1. I wanted to see if there were any new developments in the values tribes from SITS;
2. Money has meaning in my life. I "work hard for the money". I enjoy the rewards of my hard work and I want to be in better control of where it goes!
3. I wanted to gather some advertising fodder in my research as a latent marketer. (A former CEO called me that many years ago. I think it was a compliment)

Mr. Adams breaks the book into appropriately named sections i.e. making it, spending it. He also covered - in detail - the traits of the 13 "values tribes". I found once again that I do not "fit" in with any one of the tribes but in two or possibly three according to the traits listed.

*[Begin thought branching...] Throughout my life, I never really did fit in with any one group, genre or clique. Maybe that's why I can appreciate his two books. Perhaps I'm more of a generalist. They tend to survive better than specialists. (Species-wise anyway)*

Here are some key points and passages I gathered from the book, mainly because I can REALLY relate to them personally:

- Canadians generally are more reserved than Americans in showing our wealth. We aren't as likely to flaunt it as openly;
- Canadians like bargains and the emotional satisfaction during the "hit" of acquisition.
- "Canadians' diminished attention to material goods and increased focus on experiential consumption has produced winners and losers, like any change in the market. The losers are, of course, those who persist in trying to hock *stuff* without offering potential buyers some emotional or sensuous inducement";
- New Aquarians are among the tribes that consider our work as a source of personal satisfaction. Their job is important to their [sense of direction in life](#);
- On giving to charity: Canadians with higher incomes donate more to charity in absolute terms. Those with lower incomes generally contribute a greater proportion of their income. One could explain this as acknowledging how fortunate they are in comparison with others and "...spare a few dollars to help the (even) less fortunate."
- On happiness: "...to some extent, at least, our finances affect the way we see the world". "Money also affects our feelings about our own lives - that is, what psychologists have termed our "subjective well-being" (SWB), or in lay terms, our happiness."
- "...Constant worry about money, as many Canadians know, can significantly diminish the chances that one will be "happy" on a day-to-day basis."

I highly recommend this book. You can take the short version of the survey used for their research at the [Environics Web site](#). What tribe do you

belong to? Perhaps more than one?



[I AM Canadian](#)

Theresa Jobateh  
Posted: June 2001

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## Sex in the Snow - Canadian Social Values at the end of the Millennium



[see also Better Happy Than Rich?](#)

For more information on this book and Michael Adams, please visit: <http://erg.vironics.net/sexsnow>

Don't go thinking "chilly willies" here! *Snow*: represents what is most enduring in Canadian Values. *Sex*: represents the hedonism and demand for immediate gratification that distinguishes the recent evolution of social values in the country.

I discovered this book in 1998. I found it very interesting and was pleased to know Canadians are breaking out of the Race, Religion and Region molds and into Values Tribes. Funny to say, I found myself represented in both of the Boomer Tribe "Connected Enthusiasts" as well as the Gen X tribe "New Aquarians". More so in the latter.

A choice excerpt (page 37):

*"If I am not living a life of self sacrifice and gratification deferred to the next life, then I want to cram as much experience as I can into the cosmic second I am allotted in this life. How? By giving expression to as many aspects of my personality as possible.*

*I am at once male and female, young and old, universal and peculiar. I can be strong (male) at the office and nurturing (female) at home, or vice versa. I can be a mature adult and occasionally a crazy, carefree teenager.*

*I can lead or I can follow - depending on my competence, interest and circumstances - what we label the transition from hierarchy to heterarchy. I can be a member of an élite in one sphere, but just an ordinary guy in many others. And unlike in the past, I DECIDE. My behaviour is not dictated by historical precedent or societal conventions. All this is the personality equivalent of digital compression: multiple signals in one channel, multiple identities in one life."*

Theresa Jobateh  
Posted: December 2000





Actors from left to right: Allan Meltzer (W.W. Campbell), Kathryn Baker (S.F. Harrison), Peter Politis (W.P. Lett)



Chris Roberts (Alfred Garneau)

[Read more about The Poets' Pathway](#)

*A Day at the  
Writers Festival*

*Essay*

*Pictorial*

*Home*



My Encounter with the Secret Bench of Knowledge.  
[Click for a closer look](#)









"In reading you discover yourself"

For more information on this wonderful work of art, visit the NLC site at:  
[www.nlc-bnc.ca/10/7/a7-2000-e.html](http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/10/7/a7-2000-e.html)

Essay • Pictorial Home

Scenes from the MacKenzie King Bridge  
[Click for a panoramic view](#)



Scenes from the MacKenzie King Bridge  
[Click for a panoramic view](#)



Scenes from the MacKenzie King Bridge  
Click for a wider shot



Scenes from the MacKenzie King Bridge  
Click for a wider shot



Scenes from the MacKenzie King Bridge  
Click for an extended view



Scenes from the MacKenzie King Bridge



[View the scenery again?](#)

Reflections on a Bridge - a poem

I had just encountered some poetry  
From the 19th century  
Read by actors on a hushed stage  
Dressed in the costume of that age.

Civil servants and settlers then  
Celebrating nature with the pen  
Painting the river, the young green land  
Wishing man and nature go hand in hand.

I study this calm urban scenery  
the hot concrete and cool greenery  
It's been so long I can't remember  
Knowing such a warm September.

The time is my own on this Saturday  
Alone and curious I make my way  
Alone and free of all demands  
Whiny little voices and busy hands.

So on this bridge, here I stand  
Gazing over this developed land  
This day is mine and belongs to me  
I choose what I want to hear or see.

Here I stand, slowly gazing around  
Then to the direction that I am bound.  
I capture some scenery from this day  
Then take the bridge to continue my way.

I continue my way along the street

Feeling freedom and adventure on my feet  
Anticipating encounters and discovery  
On this day that belongs to me.

*T.A. Jobateh*  
*Inspired September 21, 2002*

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*Essay: Pictorial Home*

Sparks Street on a Saturday - Windows and Sky  
Click to look up, waaaaay up!



Sparks Street on a Saturday - Windows and Sky  
Click to look up, waaaaay up!



Sparks Street on a Saturday - Windows and Sky  
Click to look up, waaaaay up!



Sparks Street on a Saturday - Windows and Sky  
Click to look up, waaaaay up!







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[Start again?](#)

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*Essay: Pictorial Home*

My Encounter with an Innnteresting Tree



Essay  
Pictorial  
Home

## 2002's Bluesfest Blues

I got the blues, I have to tell ya  
for a long time hardly seen my fella  
at least he did give me a bit of a warnin',  
comes home in the wee hours of the mornin'.

While he's out drumming and singing a song  
I've been with three kids all weekend long  
they've been asking about him every day  
Mom, did our Daddy go away?

"No." I say to the darlings politely,  
"He's been going downtown Ottawa nightly,  
Gone to the Bluesfest and to perform maybe,  
and better remember that Colin James CD!"

Finally it's over for another year  
I have to give out a muffled cheer  
There are rooms to tidy and bikes to mend,  
til the Jazz festival begins this weekend!

*Theresa Jobateh, July 2002*  
*[www.jobateh.ca](http://www.jobateh.ca)*



# Homepage Usability - 50 Websites Deconstructed

Jakob Nielsen and Marie Tahir  
Published by New Riders, 2001

For more information on this book and Jakob Nielsen, please visit:  
<http://www.useit.com>

This is a follow-up to [Designing Web Usability](#) published in 2000.

I found this recent publication colourful, clean but clunky. I can't fit it into my backpack for reading on the OC Transpo commute to and from work. The plus side of this odd size is that it provides more room to display the home page examples. *It also makes a good "lap desk" for writing letters and notes!*

The first 50 pages give you complete descriptions of criteria used to review the sites. Pages 52-53 give a concise reference (I have it "postit-ed").

The remainder of the book besides the appendix and index provide detailed reviews (or deconstructions) of the fifty selected sites. These pages are colourful, well coded and labelled. As mentioned by the authors, most of the site owners will have (or should have) made corrections since the book came out.

This book is another valuable addition to my library of Web resources. I respect and admire individuals like Jakob Nielsen, Marie Tahir and Donald Norman who are proponents for usability, be it on [computers](#), the Web or everyday objects! My only qualm is how Jakob writes "Web site" as "Website". I still cannot bring myself to use his term. Same with "homepage"

*I can't seem to find room for it on my home-office desk, if you can call it that. Time to expand.*

Theresa Jobateh  
Posted: January 2002

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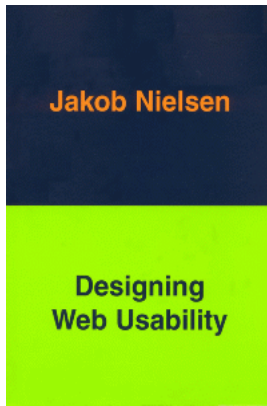
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# Designing Web Usability



For more information on this book and Jakob Nielsen, please visit:  
<http://www.useit.com>

When I was reading this book I felt repeated waves of "deja vu". A lot of the recommendations Jakob was providing were already in practice on most of my Web sites. I admit I still have a fair way to go but am very proud that I have been on the right road all along throughout this journey in the Web.

Although I am a creative individual, I have not let the use of overly graphical techniques and "flash-y" methods get in the way of the initial purpose of designing Web sites. As Jakob states numerous times, design the site so your users can find what they came looking for, without unnecessary distractions and frustrations. As he advises in his short review, "Relish simplicity, and focus on the users' goals rather than glitzy design."

I recommend this book to budding (and blossoming) Web designers. It will hold a place of honour in my growing reference shelf, never to collect dust, always used. I look forward to the next book too! ([January 2002: got there, read that](#))

*Theresa Jobateh*  
*Posted: November 2000*

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# Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper

Nicholson Baker 2001 Random House. Printed on acid-free paper  
(The book, not this review!)

For more information on this book and Nicholson Baker, please  
visit: <http://www.randomhouse.com> where you can also buy an  
eBook version. Interesting.

I learned about this intriguing book while leafing through a copy of Strategy Magazine (advertising newspaper). In my research as a potential marketer, I managed to obtain a free subscription to this printed resource. They also have a [Web site](#). One of the seasoned professionals mentioned this book in a column about the benefits of advertising in print editions of newspapers than on-line editions because readers (a-hem potential clients) would more likely see your ad! It was called "In Praise of Paper". How appropriate. There's a lot to be said about paper.

I would like to add that on-line editions of newspapers don't even keep proper archives of their papers. But that's another issue for another day...

It took about two months before this book was available to me from the Ottawa Public Library. It is now over-due by a week and I am rushing to write my review. Therefore, I'll keep it short and sweet.

Nicholson Baker helped open my eyes to what is happening to historical and cultural documents such as newspapers and books in the public library system. Although he focuses mainly on the US library system, he does mention events with our own [National Archives](#) in Canada. We recently heard about yet another space issue from the head librarian himself. In an [October 2001 press release in the Ottawa Citizen](#), he describes the damage that is being done to precious items due to inadequate storage facilities. C'mon Canada, let's convince our politicians that we need more clean, dry and safe accommodations for our own national records.

Mr. Baker and his family are dedicated to preserving these precious items in their entirety rather than see them scanned, photographed and tossed into the trash heap or dissected by entrepreneurs who buy them from the auctions.

There were so many names mentioned in this in-depth coverage of the "brittle books" issue, what started it, what mistakes were made and what solutions he now recommends.

Here are some tasty tidbits I learned while reading this book:

- The term "rag" has been applied to newspapers (i.e. one of Elvis Costello's songs) for years. I did not know this but... in the 1700's and 1800's, rags were added to the brewing pot to produce the material required in making newsprint. Innnnteresting.
- (*Gross-out factor*) Egyptian Mummies - which seemed to be in abundance at the time - were used for fuel in the coal trains in that region in the 1800's. They were also stripped of their rags, which were - you guessed it - washed, bleached and added to the pot for newsprint material. (Eeeeeuuwww!).
- Double Fold refers to the lame test that was performed to determine a book or newspaper's longevity. It involved folding the corner of a page (like a dog-ear) one way then another. If the piece fell off, the item was marked for microfilming and/or disposal. Scientific, eh?

If you love and cherish books, research resources and libraries, I recommend you get this one - soon! Now I hope my husband won't be too upset about having to clean out all those Tuesday Times' last year. Sorry dear, we don't have enough space. I hope the Times or the Library still keeps copies for when you have more time to do your research!

Theresa Jobateh  
Posted: October 2001

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## SEARCH RESULTS - STORY

Canada's cultural treasures rotting away in leaky library

By The Canadian Press

Thursday, October 04, 2001

OTTAWA - Water, heat and bats are robbing Canada of its literary, musical and legislative heritage, the country's national librarian said yesterday.

The National Library of Canada has lost more than 25,000 items to environmental damage in eight years and will lose more without new facilities to house its massive collection, says Roch Carrier.

"We are losing our national treasures," Carrier told a news conference. "We are losing the work of our writers, musicians, historians, researchers, journalists, poets."

There have been 68 accidents involving burst pipes, leaky roofs, excessive heat — even bats — since 1993, destroying more than \$2 million worth of material, some of it irreplaceable, Carrier said. There have been 10 accidents this year alone.

The library's entire newspaper collection is deteriorating in the basement of a non-climate-controlled building in downtown Ottawa that Carrier called a microwave oven — so hot in summer the fire alarm goes off regularly.

Newspapers are yellowing, becoming unusably brittle, falling apart under the building's tin roof. The collection includes the first newspaper published in Canada, the 249-year-old Halifax Gazette.

Needs 43 million

At the least, the library says it needs \$43 million to construct a new collections building — soon.

"I'm getting fed up," said Carrier. "It's not something very sexy. Nobody will get one vote in Canada because they saved some old papers."

Heritage Minister Sheila Copps was non-committal as she emerged from a Liberal caucus meeting yesterday.

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# Ladybugs in the movies

## Great Expectations

A review of the novel by Charles Dickens (1812 to 1870)  
with comparisons to the movie released circa. 1997

When I was still an impressionable, young lass at about age 14, I attempted to read "Great Expectations". I had heard it was about a young boy who is led on a lengthy adventure full of romance and riches.

I recall my attempt to read it. Already into the first chapter, I was saddened by young Pip's poor, humble existence as an orphan, living with his abusive older sister. I was also frightened during the scene which the escaped convict accosts him in the cemetery. It really scared the crap out of me. I could not read on, as I was afraid for Pip's life, being held at knifepoint - on his dead parents' headstone by this merciless brute.

Dickens wrote so well describing the bleak conditions of this area of England and the dreadful scene in the cemetery. I was depressed, numb and frozen with fear. I could not read on.

**At this point** - if **you** have actually read this far - you may be asking impatiently, "*what on earth does this have to do with ladybugs?*"

Enter the movie version of "Great Expectations". This movie starring Gwyneth Paltrow, Anne Bancroft, Ethan Hawke and Robert De Niro was released around 1997. Due to family responsibilities during that blur of the late 1980's to the late 1990's, I did not get out to see movies very often.

In the spring of 2001, they were advertising the up-coming presentation on the Showcase channel. I made a special effort to watch it then.

The cinematography of the movie was beautiful. I was drawn into the lush green world of "Paradiso Perduto" and the refreshing but threatening waters of the ocean.



The ladybug symbol made its appearance at both the beginning and the end of the movie. One lighted upon Fin's hand when he was an innocent, creative boy and again as a grown man who was now scarred by heartbreak and defeat. I saw the ladybug as a symbol representing the start and end of his long experience with hope, love and deceit. In a way, a symbol of serendipity *and* the elusiveness of dreams.

Although the film version was visually appealing and held more of an element of romance glazed with sensuality, it drifted much too far from the original story.

Instead of 1800's England, this movie was staged in the 1970's in the southeastern United States. Instead of the lengthy dialogue between the poor boy and his well-to-do tormentress, there were titillating scenes in the movie that Dickens would not have dared to write about during his time!

In the book, the young hero is the receiver of "great expectations" or funding from an anonymous benefactor. He is groomed to be a gentleman to work in the financial field. In the movie, he is an artist presented with the opportunity to display his creations in the big city.

I can understand the changes for locale and era, but they cut out too many of the key characters (Wemmick, Herbert Pocket and Jaggers). Was it to keep the movie within reasonable time limits and to make it seem more in line with our times? At least they still kept "Uncle" Joe's character accurate at most times. My favourite character in the book was Wemmick and how he loved and cared for his aging father in their humble but delightful home. I believe the term of endearment he used for him was "Old Heart".

The producers of the movie did not even allude to Estella's parentage and the paradox it presented.

May 2001, I went on a quest to the Ottawa Public Library for a copy of the book and to buck up and brave the story once more.

*The normal print books were all on loan so the large print version had to suffice. This turned out to my advantage as large print books are great for reading in bed. You sit up with one or two pillows behind your back and one on your lap (or a small stuffed animal). Then you rest the book upon your lap and read.*

## Ladybugs in the movies - Great Expectations?

The story presents the theme about the common class struggle and loving someone who comes from a different social and financial position. It could also teach people to be more perceptive to influences around them. Pip (or Fin) assumed his benefactor was one person, whereas all the while it was another.

Except for the spiders, bugs and beetles crawling around in Sardis, Miss Havisham's crumbling estate, there was NO mention of Ladybugs in the book version!

In the end I enjoyed the opportunity to read this classic book and actually finish it! I liked it much more than the movie.

T. Jobateh  
October 2001

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