

2006

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Save your podcast subscriptions online

If you're using [iTunes](#) to download your podcasts, have you ever had it crash, or otherwise screw up your library of music? Chances are, you didn't lose your actual music, you just had to re-add it to your library. But what about your podcast subscriptions? You probably had to scour the web looking for the websites of podcasts which you never visit just to get your RSS feeds back.

Here's a solution that lets you subscribe to your podcasts using online tools so you never lose a subscription again.

Ok, first, let's go through all the tools I'm going to use:

1. [Google Reader](#)
2. [Feedburner](#)

That's it!

First, if you don't have one already, get yourself a [Google account](#), and head over to the [Google Reader](#) website. Google Reader is an RSS aggregator that lets you tag your different feeds with arbitrary terms. Since we're talking about podcasts here, I suggest you tag your podcast feeds with 'podcasts'. I use the plural *podcasts* rather than the singular because it lets me distinguish the media feeds from the blogs I read about *podcasting*. *Podcast*, the singular form, would match them both.

If you have your feeds in an existing aggregator, like Juice, that lets you export an [OPML](#) file of your feeds, Google Reader will allow you to import all of them at once by clicking on the settings option in the upper right and then clicking on the **Import/Export** tab. This is by far the easiest way to go. If you can't export your feeds, you'll have to copy each one, and subscribe to them in Google Reader individually. Fortunately, this is the only painful part of the process.

GoogleReader.jpg

GoogleReader-NewFolder.jpg

After you have all your podcast feeds imported into Google Reader, and you've tagged them all with a uniquely identifiable term, you need to export the feed for all items tagged with that term. Click back to the main google reader page, and then click on settings again, and go to the Tags tab. You should

see your 'podcasts' tag along with an RSS icon, a series of concentric orange quarter-circles. Click the icon to make the feed public.

GoogleReader-MakeTagFeedPublic.jpg

Click on the 'view public page' link to view the exported items. This page should have an [ATOM feed](#) associated with it. ATOM is similar to RSS, but most podcast readers can't understand it. We have one more major step to go before iTunes can download your shows.

Copy the ATOM feed for your podcasts and head over to [Feedburner.com](#). Drop the URL for your ATOM feed in the box on the front page, and check off the "I am a podcaster" check box. Click the next button. If you don't already have a Feedburner account, the website will give you the chance to sign up for one now. You can also take this opportunity to pretty-up the name and address for the feed you're going to be subscribing to in iTunes.

FeedBurner-BurnYourFeed.jpg

That's pretty much it. Now just take the new feed you've created, and subscribe to it in iTunes using the Advanced menu, Subscribe to Podcast (or the podcast downloader of your choice). The URL for your feed will be something like **http://feeds.feedburner.com/<what you typed in>**. Now, when you want to subscribe or unsubscribe to a podcast, just go to [Google Reader](#), add the RSS feed, and tag it with 'Podcasts' and the shows will get automatically downloaded.

FeedBurner-YourBurnedFeed.jpg

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-12-19 at 19:54:45.

.NET complaint of the month: XmlDocument is not serializable

I gotta say, on the whole, I'm quite pleased with this .NET Framework that Microsoft has provided us with to develop software with. It's not often that I find [something worth complaining about](#). But this is one of those times.

One of the cool features of .NET is that you can mark a class, or other data structure as *serializable*, which basically means that the structure and all its data can be easily tossed across a wire, performing a 'deep' copy. This is typically performed by creating an XML representation of that object and its data in a [SOAP \(Simple Object Access Protocol\) envelope](#), or some binary form.

Now for the irony: The [System.Xml.XmlDocument](#) class is ***not fucking serializable***. Yes, that's right. Microsoft's implementation of the very stuff used to serialize *arbitrary* objects is itself not serializable. I had to implement my interface with strings instead. Figure that out.

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-12-19 at 19:04:44.

Being sick sucks

I don't get sick very often, but because of that, when I do get sick, I hate it that much more. In retrospect, I felt this particular sickness coming on a few days in advance, but I was reluctant to admit that I was getting sick, and if I heeded the statistics, chances are that I wasn't.

Fast forward to two days and one holiday party later. I wake up on Monday morning and feel like a bucket of smashed assholes. Feeling this way is enough to make me email in sick for (I think) only the second time this year. Don't tell my boss, but I wasn't really sick the first time...I think I just wanted to sleep in. For those of you who think emailing in sick is weird, I say calling in sick is just a good way to get caught in a lie.

Monday was a horrible day. I was burning up, but still felt, no matter how many clothes I put on, like I was freezing. I'm sitting in front of my computer wearing a sweatshirt, a fleece jacket, and a blanket, shivering. Between catching up on my TV watching, and calling into a [scrum meeting](#), I actually managed to do some work, testing, mostly.

Tuesday morning I felt largely better, save a cough which persists to this day. From experience, this will probably last until at least after the Holiday season, and I get up at 4am to go stand in line at [Futureshop](#) for [Boxing Day](#) deals.

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-12-13 at 23:23:40.

Interesting way to sell digital music

I'm regularly browsing [Zunior.com](#), checking out new music that I can play on the [podcast](#), and I came across an interesting idea that they had: [a digital box gift set](#) where MP3s get snail mailed to you on a USB thumbdrive that you get to keep as well.

[zunior_boxset.jpg](#)

It's obviously not as speedy as a download, but you actually get something physical, which is kind of cool, and thumbdrives are definitely useful. I thought this was a cool idea, especially for a gift. Sending someone a download doesn't exactly feel "festive", but the thumbdrive could actually be wrapped and given as a present.

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-12-06 at 10:40:34.

My episode of commandN is online

In case you weren't clicking 'reload' on the page as much as I was, looking for this week's episode of [commandN](#), it came online just moments ago. My segment starts at about 2 minutes in.

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-12-05 at 14:49:14.

@#\$%! Snow

I'm surprised I'm the first one to post about this. Maybe the rest of you are still stuck in traffic. More people should do audio posts...It's very therapeutic.

As you might expect, this audio is loaded with expletives. Handle with care.

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-12-04 at 20:51:19.

You like Christmas music, right?

SantaRock.gif I'm sure that some of you know that in addition to [Spine Radio](#), I also do a music podcast for [Zunior.com](#). This month, I produced [a mostly-holiday-themed episode](#) that you might enjoy. Don't worry, it's not overly sappy sweet with holiday cheer...I don't think I could stand that either.

If you're interested, you can find it at [zunior.blogspot.com](#), and if you like it, you can subscribe with [the Zunior.com Podcast's RSS feed](#).

For anybody who missed the chance to win [the Thurstons](#) album I gave away in a previous episode of Spine Radio, you have another chance to get it in the Christmas episode of the [Zunior.com Podcast](#).

Originally posted on Sunday, 2006-12-03 at 14:05:10.

Windom Earle at Stage Nine

I'm killing myself waiting for this show. Go check out [Windom Earle](#) tonight at [Stage Nine](#) or you'll regret it. I mean it. They rocked the house at the [Sappy Records Music Festival](#), and they'll rock the house again, I'm sure of it.

[windomearle.jpg](#)

Originally posted on Friday, 2006-12-01 at 15:05:52.

MySpace is a scourge (to tabbed browsing)

The worst thing about MySpace isn't the ugliness of the site. It isn't the fact that it's horribly slow. For anybody who uses tabbed browsing regularly, it's got to be the music player that starts playing as soon as the page loads.

I can appreciate the use of MySpace for discovering bands that I haven't heard before, but I often want to click on somebody's friends and open them up in new tabs for me to peruse at my leisure. If any of them have music players, they will **all** start playing. <sarcasm>And nothing sounds as awesome as 4 completely different songs playing at once.</sarcasm>

Why can't the song play after I click play? I don't have a "music" myspace account, but if this is a setting, I'm going to start cursing every band who doesn't turn it off.

[myspace.png](#)

Image courtesy of [xkcd](#), a webcomic of romance, sarcasm, math, and language.

Also, does it piss anyone else off that the retarded graphical madness that goes on in myspace's music player has **absolutely nothing** to do with the shit that's playing? They look like [VU meters](#), but they correspond **in no way** to the actual output levels.

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-11-30 at 08:15:50.

I'm going to be on commandN

[Jeff MacArthur](#) and [Irene](#) of the co-hosts of [commandN](#) came by my house tonight to film a segment about audio podcasting for their next episode.

Jeff does the techTIPS segment for [commandN](#), and along with his sister [Amber MacArthur](#), and [a few friends](#), they kick out a 15-minute-long, tech-centric video of news, tips, and web-picks every week.

Be sure to check it out. Jeff tells me that my episode will be on the web on Monday (December 4th).

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-11-29 at 21:15:41.

New condom technology

Who would have thought that they could improve on the condom? I mean, everybody knows they suck, but they do the job, right?

I must admit, I haven't thought about it much myself, but you wouldn't think there was much room to advance in prophylactic technology, but then there it is, a [huge fucking advance \(no pun intended\) in prophylactic technology](#).

[prontocondoms.jpg](#)

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-11-27 at 23:16:25.

FREE Shotgun and Jaybird Tickets

For anyone who doesn't typically read the Spine Radio blog, I'm posting this on the main page because in [this week's show](#) I'm giving away two free passes to the [Shotgun and Jaybird](#) show on December 9th.

You're dumb if you don't try and go. My company holiday party is that night, and I'm *still* going to try to go. Shotgun and Jaybird are worth paying to go see, and you could do it for free, I can't imagine why you wouldn't.

Listen to [the show](#) for instructions on how to cash in. Check out [Shotgun and Jaybird's MySpace](#) for examples of what you'll miss if you don't go.

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-11-27 at 22:27:46.

Random thought

Body parts are like remote controls: They cost almost nothing to produce, but they're very expensive to replace.

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-11-23 at 16:13:36.

Selling vintage computers on Ebay

[I am selling some vintage computers](#) on Ebay right now. If you're in the market for some museum pieces or just looking for a better doorstop, go on and take a look at [my auctions](#). If you're in Halifax, I'll deliver them to you for free.

Just think, **YOU** could own the machine that launched my career as a software developer, the [Commodore Vic 20](#). At the tender age of 5, I wrote my first line of [BASIC](#) on that very keyboard. Or you could proudly display your very own [MacQuarium](#) made from the [MacIntosh Plus](#). The possibilities are *endless*.

[303822585_f92763f50f_m.jpg](#) [303825858_1cf2bc9278_m.jpg](#)

Bid Now!

[Commodore Vic 20 head unit only untested](#)

[Apple MacIntosh Plus with 20SC external hard drive](#)

[Commodore Vic 20 with TV adapter and manual](#)

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-11-23 at 01:03:53.

Axl Rose sings "Liquor and Whores" with Bubbles

Somebody managed to get away with video-taping the Trailer Park Boys on stage with Guns'n'Roses. Axl actually sings a couple of verses of "Liquor and Whores" with Bubbles. Cool shit.

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-11-23 at 00:33:56.

Sounds re-instated after IE 7 upgrade

I recently upgraded to IE 7 thanks to [Windows Update](#). I thought everyone could benefit from something that I noticed after I started using it for a while.

The machine I upgraded was the one I use to record the [Spine Radio](#) and [Zunior.com Podcasts](#) on. If you noticed in the [latest episode of Spine Radio](#) that there were a couple of beeps and clicks, then you'll know what I'm about to complain about.

I had my system sounds turned off; "No Sounds" was the profile that I had chosen. After installing IE 7, it had gone ahead and added all explorer's sounds back again -- very annoying. Definitely something to be aware of if you use your PC for recording things.

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-11-20 at 22:30:43.

CCTV Cameras + Google Video = Halifax's next income source

I've been thinking about the new [video camera that Halifax has focused on the corner of Grafton and Blowers](#), "Pizza Corner" for us locals. Cameras are great for capturing all the stupid shit we do -- especially when we're drunk. And where do most drunken videos end up?

[YouTube](#). Or basically, due to the recent 1.6 billion dollar acquisition, what the internet is calling "GooTube".

Now that the concept of [revenue sharing has been introduced](#) for videos on Google Video, the City of Halifax should take advantage of all the [closed circuit TV cameras in the downtown area](#), and get some of the content up on the web for the rest of us to enjoy and laugh at. This might do more to discourage vandalism and crime, when the potential criminals know that there could be millions of eyes watching them break the law. Of course it might encourage people to show off for the cameras as well, but at the very least, Halifax can make a quick cash grab from one of the most lucrative sources on the web: [Google Ads](#).

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-11-20 at 11:06:53.

Best purchase I've made all day

[Transformers: The Movie \(20th Anniversary Edition\)](#)

Enough said.

Originally posted on Friday, 2006-11-17 at 14:16:45.

My photos on LeftHip.com



The rumours are true -- I'm all kinds of new media. Not only do I have a mean [radio voice](#), but I take a wicked photo as well. A couple of [my photos](#) from the [Halifax Pop Explosion](#) were used for a [feature on the Pop Explosion](#) by [Left Hip Magazine](#).

[278013546_e2a6c6ef3c_m.jpg](#) [278031306_16d04251bf_m.jpg](#)

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-11-13 at 18:12:13.

Headphones

About once a year, I go on a hunt for a pair of headphones. Last year, I picked up [a Sennheiser HD570 set](#). I found them to be a great pair for home listening, but they're not exactly what I'd call 'portable'. I also bought [some inexpensive cans](#) for the [Spine Radio](#) Studios, but they're hardly ideal.

	vs.	
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What I'd really like to find is a set of headphones that can block most of the ambient sound so that I can only hear what I'm monitoring. More than once I've tried to record a rock show, and I only found out afterwards that my recording was crap -- I couldn't distinguish between my recording and the actual show, and the levels were completely overloaded. I only have a little MP3 player to record on, and I suppose the real solution is to buy a proper solid-state recorder with [VU meters](#) and other indications that the recording was peaking, but those are [generally pretty expensive](#).

My other problem is that my head is just fucking huge. This presents two issues with the majority of headphones out there today. Headphones that fit other people constantly squeeze my head and give me massive headaches if I wear them for any appreciable amount of time. Headphones that don't cover the *entire* ear are just uncomfortable.

Those HD-570s I talked about before completely cover my entire ear, and are actually very comfortable for me. Does anyone know if there is a "closed" style of those? Closed, as opposed to open style, is important, because when you have a microphone in your face, and headphones on your ears, sound can bleed back into the mic. While this doesn't cause the feedback squeal that having your speakers & mic on at the same time would, it'll give you a weird sounding reverb.

I don't expect anyone else has these problems, but on the off chance that somebody does, what did you do?

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-11-06 at 14:19:06.

Sons of Butcher, TONIGHT at Stage Nine!

They're playing here, in Halifax, tonight, at [Stage 9](#).

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-10-23 at 14:23:55.

Halifax Pop Explosion 2006

How I could I write about the Halifax Pop Explosion without playing music? I decided to put my thoughts in an MP3.

Check it out.

Links:

[Shotgun and Jaybird](#)

[The Sourkeys](#)

[Pony Up!](#)

[The Diablos](#)

[Duchess Says](#)

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-10-23 at 00:45:25.

My own personal feed, burned

Just now, I went and hooked myself up with a feedburner feed for my personal blog here on Spine.cx. What's really cool is that I found out that I can have [all the links](#) that I post with [del.icio.us](#), and [all the photos](#) I post on [Flickr](#) spliced into the feed with no extra effort from me. I'm all about being lazy. I think it will also automatically change any MP3 I link to into a podcast enclosure as well, if you're into that sort of thing.

So, if you want the one-stop-shop for all things Steve, check it out:

<http://feeds.feedburner.com/stevedinn>

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-10-17 at 18:49:52.

Motorola SLVR L7 Review

Last week, I bought a [Motorola SLVR L7](#) from a guy on eBay. It's basically like the RAZR, but it's the candy bar style of phone instead of a flip phone. So far, I'm liking it. It's not that I didn't like my [iMate Jasjar](#), but there are some obvious advantages that the SLVR has over it. For one, it's an insane amount smaller and lighter. It also has an almost completely metal body, which I'm sure adds to the weight, but makes it feel very sturdy in your hand. The Jasjar has WAY more processing power, and a much bigger screen, but after carrying it around in my pocket for more than a year, I really started to yearn for something that wouldn't weigh my pants down and clunk against my leg when I took every step. (Not that I don't have that problem already...*rimshot!*)

[slvrfront.jpg_slvrside.jpg](#)

The SLVR is just a smidge over a centimeter thick, and not very much taller than a RAZR when it's closed. You can honestly hardly even tell it's in your pocket. The things that drew me to the SLVR/RAZR over other phones was not only this form factor, but also the fact that its connection for data and charging was not some esoteric \$80 cable that my older Nokia phone required, but a standard mini-USB cable.

Given that the phone has a standard USB jack in the side of it, I can plug it into my computer, and automatically have my contacts synchronized to it...I didn't have to re-type in a single one. I can also easily get the photos onto my computer to [post via flickr](#) or anywhere I choose. I really pity most people that have to use their data plans to send themselves photos through email or some other such kludge. The camera isn't really that great; it only takes 640x480 images. Obviously camera-phones don't replace real digital cameras unless you really don't care about your photos.

Contacts on Motorola phones took a little bit of getting used to for somebody who's only used Nokia phones up until now. Nokia phones' contacts were grouped by the contact name, whereas the Motorola doesn't seem to group contacts at all by default. I managed to get this worked out, but it wasn't as intuitive as I would have thought.

I'm sure some of you are yelling at the screen that I should have just read the manual. Well, that's where you'd be correct. However, I **did** read the useless, waste-of-pulp, craptastic, bundle of pages that sullies the name of manuals everywhere and it has not much more than a diagram labeling the buttons. Fortunately there are many, many people who use the RAZR, which uses the same software as the SLVR, and one of them was able to tell me what I needed to do. It's not like it would have made or broken the phone for me, but it's nice that I can make it do what I want.

For all you crazy kids who like your ring tones, it's easy to add them to the SLVR. Just like you can drag

all your photos off of the phone, you can drag MP3s onto it. I've managed to add a separate ring tone to each person who I would normally call or would call me. There's only about 6 megs of space on the phone, so I made them 15 seconds or less and encoded them at 48 kbps and 22 kHz. When played on the phone, there's no noticeable loss in quality, because that's about as good as the speaker is anyway.

That's all I have to say about it after a week of using the phone. It's actually more remarkable that I don't have more annoyances to report. That's something in itself. I guess that means it's pretty good :)

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-10-17 at 00:25:16.

Firefox 2.0 release due out within the week

The actual release version of [Firefox](#) 2.0 is due out this week. It's got a bunch of cool features, but a couple of my favourites are the following:

Session restore. If the installation of a plugin or theme necessitates a restart of the browser, or *gasp* the browser crashes, how annoying is it to lose all of the pages you had open in your 15 tabs? With the session restore feature, Firefox 2.0 will remember all the URLs you had opened in all of those 15 tabs. Upon restarting, you'll be asked whether you want to restore all of those open tabs. Very handy.

Inline spell checking. Many of you will know how much of a stickler for proper grammar and spelling I am. I truly believe this feature will at least prod and poke the lexicographically-challenged folks out there to right click on their red-underlined chaff and pick out the proper words.

Check out the rest of the [new features in Firefox 2.0](#)

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-10-16 at 23:30:28.

Sunday Shopping

As I'm sure everybody here expected, I made it my mission to go out shopping on Sunday. I headed for Bayers Lake and shopped at both [Futureshop](#) and [the Superstore](#).

Futureshop was completely unprepared for how busy their store was going to be. Only one checkout was open and the line-up quickly wound its way past all reasonable lengths. Even when the second checkout opened, it still took quite a while to get through. At the Superstore, it was even worse -- they **were** prepared, but the crowds still overwhelmed the cashiers. See the pictures below.

[New Futureshop hours Sunday Shopping line-up @ the Superstore](#)

Originally posted on Sunday, 2006-10-15 at 17:50:56.

Spine.cx mentioned in the Halifax Herald

In case you hadn't caught it, [Spine.cx](#) was mentioned in the Halifax Herald a couple of days ago. I'm wouldn't be surprised if you didn't catch it; it was quite inconspicuous. It was only after it was pointed out to me by [Brent](#) that I saw it myself.

Anyway, it looks as though they were looking for confirmation of public opinion for their story on [musicians licensing their music for ads](#), and they googled something and found [my previous blog post about hearing Joel Plasket in a Zellers ad](#). They then shamelessly stole the text without so much as a link back here or a nod to the original poster ([Keely](#)).

I maintain that I posted that a full **5 months** before it showed up in the Herald. I'm on the fucking ball, you all know it :)

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-10-11 at 18:41:06.

The Michelin RAZR?

[This case](#) for the [Motorola RAZR](#) makes it look like it was made by [Michelin](#). I suppose it might also save it from a fall down the stairs:

[michelin_bib.jpg](#) [RAZR-Michelin.jpg](#)

Originally posted on Saturday, 2006-10-07 at 15:28:39.

It's about time

A Nova Scotia judge has issued a ruling stating that [the provincial government went beyond its powers by preventing grocery stores from opening 7 days a week](#).

The article goes on to say that the Premier would "clear the way for wide-open Sunday shopping". Hopefully this means that full-blown, non-grocery store openings aren't far behind. I feel like we're finally catching up to the rest of the world -- too bad it had to involve the courts.

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-10-04 at 14:21:44.

I should write the Coast with this

So, the Rolling Stones were here. They set up on the Commons nearest the corner of Cogswell and North Park streets. North Park street was blocked off and the traffic light pattern was changed. I am not going to complain about sitting on Rainnie drive at a constant red light for 10 minutes last week (I ran it, despite the fact that there were 5 uniformed cops right on the other side of the intersection). I understood that things would probably be fucked up until the stage was torn down and all the tractor trailers were removed from North Park Street.

Would somebody please tell me why that nobody took a look at how those lights were supposed to work before they changed them? I drove through that intersection today, as it is my regular route to work, and whomever set it back to "normal" obviously didn't understand how much of a bitch that 5-way intersection is and that some of the lights are supposed to have an advance flashing green. Well now they don't; I spent about 25 minutes waiting on North Park Street in a huge line-up of traffic trying to turn left. This is a distance that I can usually cover in less than 4 minutes in heavy traffic.

This really seems like something that should be pretty fucking brain-dead: Back up traffic light pattern. Apply Rolling Stones traffic light pattern. When Rolling Stones leave, re-apply backed up traffic light pattern.

Ugh.

Here's [the intersection I'm talking about](#), so you out-of-towners can commiserate with me.

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-09-26 at 09:29:31.

Spine Radio on CKDU redux

After receiving confirmation from the powers that be, I am more sure than ever that Spine Radio will hit the actual airwaves tonight at 0100h. I realize it's a bit late to post this in the hopes that anyone is going to listen live, but if you're curious what it actually sounded like on the radio, you can download it from the [CKDU archive page](#). If you're reading this on or after September 26th, [this link](#) should download the show that was aired, plus about 5 minutes on either side.

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-09-26 at 00:13:57.

Transformers fan film - The Rude Awakening of Optimus Prime

This has got to be one of the funniest fan-made videos I've seen in a long time. Of course, I probably find it funnier than most because I watched every damn episode of the Transformers like I would break out in hives if I didn't.

Rodimus, give me back that fucking matrix immediately.

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-09-14 at 10:24:13.

Spine Radio on CKDU

For anybody who listening for it like I was, [Spine Radio](#) was **NOT** broadcast last night ([Tuesday @ 01:00](#)) on [CKDU, 88.1 FM in Halifax](#), nor was it the previous week as I had thought. I sent an email to the program director at the station and she's looking into why it hasn't been airing. I guess most of the overnight programming is automated, and it is set into motion by the last actual live DJ to be in the studio the previous evening. My guess is that that DJ just didn't know the schedule had been updated and was still setting the overnight playlist to what it had been previously. Hopefully before the month of September is out, we will have heard Spine Radio on the actual airwaves at least once :)

To all you insomniac students out there who may want to listen, the web version is going to be at least a full week ahead of the one on CKDU, so the best way to get it is still to head over to [SpineRadio.com](#) and [subscribe](#).

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-09-13 at 00:50:49.

Apple releases iTunes 7.0

Earlier tonight, Apple released iTunes 7.0, mainly a vehicle to allow the sale of movies through the iTunes store, and an update to the video iPods to allow them to play downloadable games. I'm happy because the updates fixed a few of the biggest problems that I had with the iPod/iTunes combo.

First off, they fixed a simple problem by having the iPod's screen stay lit (at the minimum brightness) when it's connected to your computer. This is useful because when you dock your iPod, the screen changes to a flashing "Do not disconnect" message that you can't always see if the screen goes dark. Since the iPod is charging anyway, there are no worries about your battery going dead because the screen is on.

Second, I had a weird problem that occurred most of the time when I docked my iPod. It would forget what I had listened to! If I listened to 10 podcasts before I docked, and then checked the status of my iPod in iTunes after I docked, my iPod would forget that I listened to those 10 songs. What a pain in the ass! More often than not, I found myself scrolling through those tracks again, just to mark them as played. I had heard from some of my Mac-using friends that they didn't have this problem, so I think it was probably only a PC thing.

Combined with the small little utility I had to write to monitor my podcast share on my server machine and automatically sync the new shows to my iTunes library and then to my iPod, I'm quite happy with everything now. My next step is to write a service to continually monitor iTunes to see if my iPod is docked, and then to do the syncing automatically instead of having to run the damn thing manually.

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-09-13 at 00:41:17.

Firefox 2.0 Beta 2

Firefox 2.0 Beta 2 came out a couple of days ago, and despite my bad experience with Beta 1 (that I suppose, in retrospect, I should have blogged about), I decided to throw caution to the wind and give Beta 2 a try. In 1 1/2 days of use, I have been pleasantly surprised by it.

It hasn't crashed on me yet, and has some really cool features like integrated spell-checking in forms beefed up custom search capability, and slicker looking chrome. It seems faster too, but maybe that's just me.

If you want to give it a try, you can find it on releases.mozilla.org.

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-08-31 at 20:48:18.

At least it asks...

bsod.jpg

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-08-31 at 14:57:47.

Camping is fun

I need a hobby. Well, a hobby other than one that involves me sitting in front of a computer. Anything that doesn't involve me being sedentary. I've established for myself that I hate softball, so that's out. What else is there?

Recently, while on my trip to Boston, we camped to do it on the cheap. (With 4 people in the car, and discounting all the stuff I bought, the trip only cost us \$95 each!) Besides the few trips to Blomidon that a group of us did a few years ago, I hadn't really been camping since I was a kid. I kind of like it. In the past couple of weeks, I found myself buying a tent and some hiking boots. I think I'm even going to try and fit my girthy frame with a pack large enough to go on a multi-day hike. And I'm more than a bit excited by the prospect. I'm not interested in many things that don't have circuit boards and a power source, so this is pretty cool.

There are a group of people at my place of business who are planning such an expedition, but I'm not sure I want to go too fast too soon and more importantly, I don't want to be the guy at the back slowing everyone else down.

I guess this kind of links into [my post about cool camping locations](#), but I wanted to see if anyone's game for heading out to [Kejimkujik](#) sometime in September and maybe trying to get to one of the campsites that aren't directly accessible by roads. It would be cool to see if some newbies like me would be willing to go because then we can move at our own pace and commiserate if things go poorly :)

snowtent.jpg snowcamp.jpg

I'd also be into attempting some hiking and camping in the winter months too. You might think, "Why the fuck would you go out camping in the winter?" I'd reply that it's the *perfect* time to go camping: There are no bugs, and you'll never have appreciated a campfire or hot chocolate as much in your life. You have to be prepared for the weather, for sure, but you can't have a snowball fight in the summer.

If anyone is interested, post here or [fire me off an email](#).

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-08-24 at 17:35:21.

Go see David Picco at Ginger's and/or Gus'

My step-brother, David Picco is going to be touring Atlantic Canada in the next few weeks. (He's from Newfoundland, but is currently living in Toronto.) He's playing on **Saturday, August 26th** at Ginger's Tavern on Barrington Street, and then again on **Wednesday, September 6th** at Gus' Pub on Agricola.

Anyway, it would be really cool if people could come out and support him because I think this is the only way he gets to eat. Check out his music on his myspace page: <http://myspace.com/davidpicco>.

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-08-17 at 12:00:39.

18 ways to stay focused at work

[Blogger Dave Cheong](#) has come up with [a list of 18 ways to stay focused and more productive at work](#).

I'll bet one of them is not posting on your blog...unless your blog is your work...I wonder what that's like?

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-08-15 at 10:01:49.

Free CDs (for the price of postage)

I mentioned this a couple of weeks ago in a [Spine Radio episode](#), but [Brobdingnagian Records](#) is [giving away albums](#) for the measly cost of packing material and postage. I can't think of a much better deal.

When they're gone, [they're gone](#), so [stock up!](#)

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-07-25 at 22:29:13.

ANOTHER new radio station?

Driving around today, I noticed a van beside me in traffic with 88.9 something something on the side. Unfortunately, this is [another fucking classic rock station](#).

Yes, exactly. That is exactly what Halifax needs. We have a huge shortage of classic rock stations in this city and I, for one, am a huge proponent of being able to fill my car radio presets with nothing but stations with cheesy-ass DJs playing the Rolling Stones and Aerosmith 24/7. Please, can we get 4 more classic rock stations? That's all I need. I don't get to hear Stairway to Heaven enough times in a day.

Fuck.

Now, this "new" station is just an FM re-broadcast of the AM station 960 CHNS (or vice-versa, depending on how you look at it). Oldies 96 is apparently no more; not that I care. As much as I dislike [Z103](#), at least they're trying to give us something that we don't yet have.

Originally posted on Saturday, 2006-07-22 at 22:56:00.

Spam of the week

Spam of the week:

From: Adam Phelps <AdamPhelps@0451.com>

Date: Mon, 12 Jul 2004 17:49:18 -0060

Subject: Q22

Silence. Stuck out my head. Nobody. And I went on my way, whistling a tune. Jonathan sighed. The price of being misunderstood, he thought. They Low speed ahead along the pylons, altitude three yards. Halt at the directly into his path, calling for its mother. With a tenth of a second

From: Walter Langston <WalterLangston@01-stay-in-paris-hotels.com>

Date: Jul 12, 2006 5:25 PM

Subject: 9TK

and they still don't catch on. I stabbed the ashtray with my cigarette butt. Don't be harsh on them, Fletcher Seagull. In casting you out, the delouser--the scientists call it the medical hangar--along with the boot. were strong and calm. "We've come to take you higher, to take you home.

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-07-18 at 11:36:49.

Camping in Boston

Plans are starting to come together for our road trip to Boston. We've been researching campsites so we can travel on-the-cheap, and I think we've settled on [Wompatuck State Park](#). It's about 30 minutes south of Boston, so we should be able to drive to the nearest subway station and then hit downtown.

So far, I think Jeannine and Tanya are just going to shop. We're going to be travelling with wifi-enabled laptops and a GPS (probably) so we should be able to update blogs, podcasts, photos, etc. from the road.

What's fun to do in Boston? Any requests for interviews or photos?

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-07-17 at 14:01:45.

New blog entry privacy feature

I've implemented a new feature that will let you guys not only decide whether to post a blog entry to the home page or not, but decide from 4 distinct levels of privacy for them. While coding the feature, I was thinking that it would be cool if everybody could exercise their own editorial control a little more when they're deciding what should and shouldn't go on the front page.

If you're writing something genuinely interesting, then by all means, put it on the front page. If you're simply blogging about what you did that day or musing about the stock price of porkbellies, then perhaps the front page isn't the right place for that entry.

Click inside to read about how to use the new options.

privacy.jpg

So, instead of the checkbox to put the post on the front page or not, there are now 4 options to choose from:

- 1. Show on the home page and in my personal blog.** This is the same as if you had checked the checkbox that was there before. Selecting this option will display the blog posting on the front page (spine.cx) as well as your personal blog (<you>.blogs.spine.cx). The entry will show up in RSS feeds for both the home page and your personal blog.
- 2. Show in my personal blog only.** Just like it sounds, the blog entry will not show up on the home page, but will appear in your personal blog. This option is the same as leaving the old checkbox unchecked. The post will appear in your personal blog's RSS feed only.
- 3. Require a direct link to this entry.** This option removes the post from all lists of post. It won't appear on the front page or your personal blog page, but will be reachable via a direct link to the article, e.g., <http://spine.cx/article.php?sid=1120>
- 4. Allow only me to see this entry.** The only person who can see the blog post is the author, while logged in. It is not otherwise accessible in any way.

Hopefully that gives you guys some more options to use spine.cx.

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-06-27 at 19:48:31.

Vin Art Wines offers free Absinthe tasting

For those of you who have always wanted to try real absinthe, but haven't wanted to import it from France, now's your chance. [Vin Art Wines](#) will be offering tastes of the green fairy this Saturday from 1 to 5 pm.

Not only can you pick up a bottle of this stuff for yourself, but it's on sale, and they're going to throw in the spoon for free.

Click inside to read the full text of their invitation.

La Fée Parisian Absinthe is made in Paris based on a 19th century recipe containing Wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*) and other aromatic herbs. It's the only absinthe endorsed by Marie-Claude Delahaye, founder & curator of the Absinthe Museum in France, making it the most authentic in the world.

Like true French absinthe it has a dark green colour, rich bouquet of aniseed flavour and louches (turns cloudy with the addition of water) beautifully. And the La Fée Absinthe Spoon allows it to be served correctly -- it's truly the only connoisseur's choice.

Absinthe...the Green Fairy...La Fee Verte....no other drink has the same romantic history - the French Impressionists....Toulouse Lautrec, Degas, Manet, Van Gogh....Paris in the Belle Epoque....the cafes of Montmartre....the muse of writers from Verlaine and Rimbaud to Joyce and Hemingway. Of course, there's a darker side to absinthe as well - no other drink has ever roused the same degree of passionate condemnation, and no other drink has ever been banned outright in the way absinthe was in the years leading up to 1915.

Banned for almost a century until its recent revival, absinthe is something of a "living fossil", a coelecanth amongst drinks, able to magically transport us back to the glittering world of Paris and the Belle Epoque, a world of bohemian musicians and writers, of the Moulin Rouge and the cafes of Montmartre, a world of starving struggling artists and glittering courtesans.

Come join Sommelier Derek McKinnon, the man responsible for this lovely beverage here in Nova Scotia, as he shows off cocktails, and the proper serving method of the "Green Fairy". The proper serving spoon will be provided with all purchases on this day only. (\$49.95 and well worth it!)

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-06-21 at 12:15:11.

This is why NOFX kicks everyone else's asses

There are two fairly major concerts happening on the Dartmouth waterfront this summer. The first being [Wilco on July 12th](#), and the second being [NOFX on August 14th](#).

Some of you might know that I have a hard time paying the fucking crazy prices that so-called "popular" bands want to charge for their shows. \$70 for Our Lady Peace? However the fuck much it was for washed up Motley Crue and geriatric Alice Cooper? **I do not fucking think so.**

Wilco are a pretty good band, but they're charging \$39 for their show, and there's only one other band on the bill. NOFX, on the other hand, are bringing what basically amounts to [their own fucking rock festival](#) with them, a whopping 10 bands in total, and they're only charging \$28.

And that's why they rule the school.

P.S. Yes, I actually have bought all of NOFX's albums. Legally.

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-05-29 at 19:21:51.

Photos From FNP X

Check [my Flickr photos](#) for some pics of the pub crawl. If you have photos of your own, post the URLs in the comments.

I think a good time was had by all, even if Beth didn't win any awards :)

Originally posted on Sunday, 2006-05-28 at 23:21:19.

Lost will have no re-runs in its 3rd season

[The official LOST podcast](#) from LOST producers Damon Lindelof and Carlton Cuse says that in the 3rd season of LOST, there will be **no re-runs!** The first six episodes will run un-interrupted from November, ending with a mini-cliffhanger, and then will not air for the next 12 weeks. Upon returning in February, the show will air consecutive new episodes for 17 weeks until the end of the season.

They also say that during the 12 week break, no re-runs will be aired. This is, I think, good news, because at least there will only be one gap in the season, and we, as viewers, won't be tortured by stations showing old episodes.

Originally posted on Sunday, 2006-05-28 at 22:48:06.

Shirts are in!

If you've ordered a t-shirt for the Seal Clubbing pub crawl, it is now in my possession. Please call my cell (488-8291) to arrange a time to pick it up today (and pay me if you haven't already), or you can just get it at the first bar of the crawl (Rogue's Roost) after 4:30 on Saturday evening.

Hope to see everyone out Saturday night!

Originally posted on Friday, 2006-05-26 at 11:42:33.

Lost finale! Live together, die alone

I had a phone conversation with Ian Frosst about the LOST season 2 finale. Now you can hear it too.

A personal theory: I think that the fake Henry Gale is really the fiance of Penelope Widmore that she was going to marry instead of Desmond. Her team in the north (or south) was looking for either Desmond or Henry.

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-05-25 at 00:05:18.

More cities should do this

An organization called [Doors Open Toronto](#) sponsors an annual event where the general public can have free access to "*architecturally and/or culturally significant properties that are either not usually open to the public, or would normally charge an entrance fee.*"

This seems like a really cool idea. There are a number of buildings in Halifax in which I would love to have a tour. I remember the [Bedford Institute of Oceanography](#), where my dad used to work before he retired, had a day when they were open to the public and it was very popular. I think that, especially for a tourist-industry-centric town like Halifax, this would be a great idea. You listening Kelly???

When I was going to school, it seemed as though everyone's dad worked at BIO. Weird.

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-05-24 at 14:23:28.

24 Season Finale

Don't read any further if you haven't seen the finale yet (and you don't want to be spoiled).

What the fuck is with Jack taking a call on a land line? He hasn't used a land line for the whole fucking season, he's getting planes and submarines patched into his cell phone, and some dumb operator can't forward his daughter to his cell phone? I totally saw the ending coming because of this! I thought it would have been the bluetooth headset crew and not the Chinese, but the outcome was basically the same.

It's like an unwritten rule that Jack can't end a season happy. Between getting his wife murdered, getting addicted to (and unaddicted in the SAME DAY) heroin, faking his own death, disowned by his only daughter, and getting shipped off to Shanghai in a container ship, you'd think he'd be ready for retirement.

Just the same, I can't wait for [the next three seasons](#).

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-05-24 at 00:50:30.

Big Brother UK

Just downloaded the first episode of the UK edition of Big Brother. I can't express to you, the reader, how much funnier it is than the American version. Let me count the reasons:

1. Accents. Even just inside the UK, there are countless accents. Manchester, Liverpool, Wales, Scotland, etc. Each one is completely different. Very entertaining.
2. More than one gay person. In the American version of BB, I don't think there is any chance in hell they'd have more than one gay guy on at the same time. It may be becoming more acceptable to have gay relationships in drama shows, but that's scripted, written: It's artificial. I don't believe that they're ready to allow for the potential of the public seeing an actual gay relationship develop on national TV.
3. Swearing. As far as I can tell, it's pretty much uncensored. I've heard several of the major dirty words that aren't allowed on North American television, and there haven't been any bleeps yet.

If you have the means, I recommend checking it out for yourself.

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-05-22 at 19:24:07.

Shirts have been ordered

A grand total of 48 shirts were ordered this morning. To anybody who didn't get their order in, well, too bad; you had ample time to do so.

Again, here's a link where you can pay me for the shirt(s) you ordered.

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-05-18 at 15:47:30.

Three Minutes

Frost and I talk about the 2x22 episode of *Lost*, *Three Minutes*. He's on satellite internet, so there's a little bit of lag in our Skype connection. I don't know if we have any actual insights, but we had fun.

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-05-17 at 21:00:24.

Andechs Dopplebock

[Andechs Dopplebock](#)

My brother got me to try this beer that his Austrian friend Ingo brought over from Germany, and I have to say, it's pretty good. Listen to the audio review for the full scoop.

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-05-16 at 21:10:37.

Shirt Payment Options

Because we're so close to the actual crawl date of May 27th, I am going to have to place the order for the t-shirts **no later than the morning of Wednesday, 17 May 2006**. That's *THIS WEDNESDAY*.

Several people have been asking me how much shirts are going to cost. I can now answer that question, and the price is **\$15**. You can pay in one of two ways:

1. Give me cash.
2. Pay me via PayPal:

Please get any further shirt orders and payments in to me as soon as possible. Thanks!
Originally posted on Monday, 2006-05-15 at 17:53:52.

Shirt graphics!

Spine.cx pub crawl FAQ:

- [To order a shirt](#)
- [To ask a question](#)
- The shirts will go down in price the more people order them. I am estimating that they will be \$15 or less.
- The deadline for ordering shirts is as soon as I can make it. I will not have much flex time with the shirt printers so [get your orders in **NOW**](#).
- **Saturday, May 27th!**
- You can help by telling people to [order their t-shirt **NOW**](#), and by [using this as your image on MSN messenger](#).

Click to get a bigger version.

[shirt-mockup-front.jpg](#)[shirt-mockup-back.jpg](#)

Originally posted on Sunday, 2006-05-14 at 16:11:40.

FNP X: Bar line up finalized.

I've been quite busy at work lately, so I've kind of let this pub crawl organization stuff fall a bit behind. Anyway, the bar line-up is finalized, and if you don't like it, tough. You had more than enough time to email me about it if you had any suggestions. If you have a t-shirt, there will be no cover at any of the bars.

1700h - Rogues' Roost

1830h - Maxwell's Plum

2000h - The Seahorse

2130h - Pogue Fado / The Frigate

2330h - Pacifico

The theme is still **seal clubbing**. I'll have a graphic posted up here as soon as I can.

Important: There's only **about 2 weeks** before the crawl (**Saturday, May 27th!**) so we need to **recruit like crazy**. If you're reading this, tell all your friends, tell everyone you know. Give out the URL <http://spine.cx/crawl/>. Put it on posters and post it around town, I don't care. We NEED people. Like I said, I've been lax and I haven't really done my job in this department, so I need your guys' help.

To sign up for a t-shirt: [Send me an email with "pub crawl t-shirt" in the subject line](#) and tell me what size(s) you want and whether you want a regular (Hanes/Gildan) or girly-style t-shirt. You can bulk order if you want, but when I collect the money, holding the orderer responsible for all the funds for that order. If everybody orders their own t-shirt, it'll make it easier logistically anyway.

Questions? [Email me!](#)

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-05-11 at 20:16:00.

The Question Mark

This is a three-way skype conversation between Matt, Ian, and I, talking about the episode of Lost that aired on May 10th, 2006.

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-05-10 at 21:55:50.

Joel Plaskett song in a Zellers commercial

I'm watching the second part of a two part House M.D., and what should come on but a [Zellers](#) commercial. They've had some catchy music in their ads before, such as the [Bedouin Soundclash](#), and the [Be Good Tanyas](#). Keeping in my current form of making statements that start off like questions, who should be featured in this current ad, but Halifax's own [Joel Plaskett](#) with a song off his new DVD/CD, [Make a Little Noise](#): **Nowhere with you**.

Good on Zellers ([a Canadian company](#)) for using Canadian music in their ads.

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-05-03 at 22:33:35.

CBC offers way more podcasts

[CBC](#) is now [offering podcast versions](#) of what I'm willing to bet are your favourite shows. Have you ever wanted to listen to Definatly not the Opera, but haven't been able to, because it's on right in the middle of Saturday afternoon? Now you can download the show and listen to it whenever you want. Never miss it again!

If this doesn't get you interested in podcasting, and actually subscribing to a show, I don't know what will.

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-05-03 at 12:28:21.

The Zunior.com Podcast

I have paired up with [Dave Ullrich](#) of [Zunior.com](#) to do a music podcast featuring stuff that you can buy at Zunior.com. This is only the first one, so don't be too harsh :) Hopefully, it will only get better. Please check it out and [tell me what you think](#).

You can find it on [Zunior's podcast page](#).

Featured songs:

[The Hanson Brothers - My Game](#)

[Great Lake Swimmers - See you on the Moon](#)

[Elevator - August](#)

[Eric's Trip - I'm so near here](#)

[Wintersleep - Lipstick](#)

[Jill Barber - Old Blue Carpet](#)

[The Remains of Brian Borcherdt - Flight](#)

[Mike O'Neill - Mr. Carvery](#)

[The New Pornographers - Use It](#)

[Lost Wax Guild - Streets are Empty](#)

[The Super Friendz - Girls and their Boys](#)

[Paper Moon - Daytrip to Salzburg](#)

Originally posted on Saturday, 2006-04-29 at 00:11:40.

Canadian musicians speak out against copyright laws & DRM

It's about time somebody stood up and said something, and I'm proud that it is [Canadian artists doing it](#). DRM makes it *harder* to listen to music. If I can't listen to a CD in my car, I can't bring it on a road trip, I can't push it onto my friends, and if they never hear it, they'll never go buy that CD themselves.

First of all, radio is pretty much dead to me. With the exception of [CKDU](#) and (of course) [the CBC](#), I haven't listened to radio in about 3 years. I can't remember the last time I heard a song on any of the commercial radio stations here in Halifax, and then went out and bought a CD because of it. All, and I mean **ALL**, of the new music I listen to comes from the Internet. If it weren't for the Internet, I'd probably still be listening to [Whigfield](#) and [Aqua](#). You're right...I probably wouldn't have any friends either.

Second of all, [Steven Page says it better than I ever could](#).

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-04-27 at 11:00:12.

Silent Hill

Tanya and I review and talk about the movie [Silent Hill](#).

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-04-25 at 07:55:55.

Metro Transit's clientele is top notch

Today on my way home, a fine gentleman sat next to me on the bus. He was so respectable that despite the fact that he was too drunk to do it successfully, he tried very hard to hide the fact that he was drinking a bottle of listerine. Every once in a while though, he would nip it out of his jacket pocket and empty some into the McDonalds cup he was holding. To his credit, I don't think he knew that I could see everything he was doing. He then asked me if I knew Jesus. His breath smelled exquisite. What a fine, fine gentleman.

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-04-19 at 21:57:15.

What bars shall we visit?

So, nobody has expressed great outrage at the date of **May 27th**, so I'll take that to mean that it's a good one. The theme is still open for discussion, but a sure front runner is "Seal Clubbing". The only other suggestions were my original one, "**Pub Crawl Idol**" (people didn't seem to like that one), and [something to do with the Commonwealth Games bid](#).

The second thing we have to discuss is the bars we want to attend and the time we want to attend them. As we all know, timing is of critical importance when choosing what bar to go to: some bars won't let a crawl in cover-free if it shows up too late, some have happy hours at certain times, etc.

Anybody have a preference as to what establishments this crawl should patronize? As a general rule, I like to start off with a few drinking/eating bars, and then finish the night off at a dancey bar -- that's what everybody seems to want to do when they're nice and loopy.

[Subscribe to the pub crawl information RSS feed](#)

Originally posted on Friday, 2006-04-14 at 19:36:35.

Bluetooth is good for something

So, my brother and I are sitting in the [Economy Shoe Shop](#), and for whatever reason, we want to get on the internet. He has a [Treo 650p](#), and he does it easily through the Telus' CDMA network. I have a [Jasjar](#), and I could also do it easily, if I subscribed to a data service. We did something that was really fucking neat. He exposed his device as a bluetooth modem that my device could use. My Jasjar, via bluetooth got out onto the internet through my bro's Treo 700 on CDMA. Perhaps that's a little too geeky for most people, but I thought it was damn cool.

[128431254_2853f4f976_m.jpg128431255_aef062e22b_m.jpg](#)

Originally posted on Friday, 2006-04-14 at 13:35:12.

How do you know when to stop wiping?

Don't ask. Just listen.

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-04-11 at 23:09:37.

2006 Element

I am over at Portland street Honda and I decided to try posting to my blog with my handheld. I managed to take and upload some photos to Flickr. Then I got to the blog posting and I found that there are no square brackets or greater/less than symbols on this keyboard. Anyway, here's the link:
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/stevedinn/127001417/>

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-04-11 at 13:02:27.

Pub crawl at the end of May?

Spring time means it's about time for another Spine.cx pub crawl. The tentative date is going to be **May 27th**. Keep that date free. The theme we're going with so far is "Pub Crawl Idol"...you can imagine the t-shirts.

As always, if you have any suggestions for an alternate theme and bars we should bring the crawl to, please post them in the comments to this blog entry. If you want to go ahead and sign up for a t-shirt, [send me an email](#). For always-up-to-date information on the crawl, you can sign up to the [pub crawl mailing list](#).

Originally posted on Sunday, 2006-04-09 at 18:10:48.

The .NET Framework can't count past 256

Anyone who did arts in university can stop reading now.

For the most part, I really like developing .NET applications. I think Microsoft has done a fairly good job at making a framework that's pretty nice to use. But there are some things that just piss me the fuck off.

A case in point: I'm not sure how many people know this, but there is a maximum length for a file's path; actually, there's two maximum lengths. The FAT filesystems (FAT16, FAT32) had a limit of 256 characters. Remember the days of 8.3 filenames? You'd have to nest a file fairly deep in a folder hierarchy to get to 256 characters. With the advent of Windows NT, and subsequently windows 2000 and XP, they came up with NTFS, the NT filesystem. Since this filesystem natively supported long filenames, not the silly ~1 kludge that 95, 98, and ME bore, 256 suddenly became not such a hard length to hit. They upped the maximum path length to 32768 characters. That ought to be enough for everyone, right? I still don't know who in their right mind would want to type 32k of characters to get to a file :)

My problem is that the .NET framework, now in its 2.0 incarnation, and I'm pretty sure working only on operating systems that use NTFS, cannot access a file with a path longer than 256 characters. There has been a way to access these long paths since around 1997 in Windows NT 3.51, yet here in 2006 we can't seem to get past 256 characters. This made me want to kick a framework developer square in the juniper berries.

Originally posted on Friday, 2006-04-07 at 22:04:37.

My new iPod

I've had my black 30 gig iPod now for a few weeks, so I figure it's about time I write something on her about it. First, let me say that the [iPod](#) is an amazing MP3 player. Its capacity and form factor are unrivaled by any other player out there. It simply holds the most and looks the best, while keeping a svelte figure to boot.

ipod-oblique.gif

This shit is **svelte!**

[iTunes](#), however, is a miserable bitch goddess. I don't know if it's just because I'm a Windows guy trying to use an Apple product or what, but I find iTunes *very* difficult to use. I just find the interface doesn't have the options I think it should, and if they are there, they're not in the places where I expect to find them. I consider myself a fairly experienced computer user, so in general, if I can't easily figure out your application, most of the time, your application is stupid. I'm willing to forgo that statement for some pieces of software that are inately complex, but not for a music manager like iTunes.

First of all, If you want to keep your sanity, UNCHECK the checkbox that says, "Keep iTunes Music folder organized". That thing scares the hell out of me. If your MP3s are not properly tagged with [ID3 tags](#), then who knows what the hell is going to happen. iTunes (and the iPod) work almost entirely on these tags. They are what both pieces of technology use to display when browsing your library of music, and while playing a particular selection. The only way to reasonably keep track of things, is to have all your MP3s tagged properly. I have found that a good program to do this with is called (logically) [Tag & Rename](#). It lets you generate ID3 tags from the filename of an MP3, and vice versa. It lets you do in a more tolerable way, what iTunes would have fucked up from the start.

Ok, so that's the first problem out of the way, but don't worry, there are lots more. Number two on my list has to be the *automatic update* feature of iTunes. This is supposed to keep your iTunes library synchronized with what's on your iPod. Now, even I'll agree, this sounds pretty good in practice. You can have a complete copy of your music in a nice portable form that you can listen to on the road, while you're walking, attending funerals, etc. It kind of breaks down when your music collection is like mine, and far, far larger than the 30 gigs afforded you by the (what now seems) tiny iPod hard drive.

Luckily, there is another option that would seem to be exactly what the doctor ordered: *Automatically update selected playlists only*. This would seem to say to me that whatever is in the selected playlists would be kept synchronized with the corresponding tracks in my iTunes library, but everything else on

my iPod would be left alone for me to manage manually. Unfortunately, this was not the case, and I ended up having to re-copy about 10 gigs of music to my iPod after iTunes mercilessly deleted it. Therefore, the only option left for me to use was the third and last: *Manually manage songs and playlists*. I don't revel in doing anything manually...I mean, come on, that's what computers are for. I shouldn't be subjected to anything **gasp** manual. But I didn't really care...With 30 gigs of space, I didn't figure I'd be changing the music so much anyway. Except for podcasts. New ones download every day. How the fuck am I going to deal with that?

Whew! iTunes to the rescue! Somebody thought enough to stick a podcast tab in the configuration options. That should take care of everything...right? Well, as it turns out, not so much. I don't know how many of you know this, but I am subscribed to (as of this writing) [51 podcasts](#). (It's not as bad as you think: They're not all 1 hour long like [Spine Radio](#), and they don't all release new episodes as frequently as once a week.)

Even though I'm sure iTunes would be more than capable of handling the multitude of subscriptions, there was no easy way to *move* these subscriptions from [my other \(and current\) podcast downloader](#) into iTunes. And even if there was, I wouldn't really want to use iTunes for it. Because I subscribe to so many shows, the sheer size of all the downloads can grow quite quickly, so I would rather my podcasts download onto my server machine at home, the one with the terabyte of disk space, and not my laptop. I'll go into my podcast receiving set-up at some point, but not right now.

Anyway, since I basically couldn't use iTunes as my podcast downloader, I had to figure out a way to somehow automatically get podcasts that were being downloaded onto, and shared from, my server machine onto my iPod. As it turns out, that's not trivial. Unlike [Windows Media Player](#), iTunes does not have the option to monitor a directory in your filesystem, and automatically add any files to its library that it doesn't have yet. When I used a [Windows Mobile](#) device to listen to podcasts, this is exactly what I did. New podcasts would get picked up by Media Player, and a smart playlist would sync them to my device. With no way to do the same in iTunes, I'm left with a problem. But, hey, I'm a software developer, and this problem is starting to look a little bit like a nail.

Non developer types may want to skip to the end of the marked section. Anyone who's interested, or suffering from insomnia, feel free read all the gory details.

“ After a little bit of [googling](#), I found out that iTunes has a [COM interface](#). Perfect. I fired up my development environment and went to work. It turns out that iTunes interfaces aren't so much a programming interface as they are the COM representation of the iTunes program itself. If there was a menu item or button you could click on the GUI, there was a method on a COM object you could call do do the same thing.

However, since I could accomplish what I wanted to do via the GUI, I could also do it via the interfaces. With a pretty shallow learning curve, I whipped up a small command line app that just scanned my podcast share for anything that was newer than the last time it had run, and added those items to the iTunes library. It would then do its best to synchronize any new podcasts over to the iPod (if it was connected), and remove any old ones that I had already listened to. It works pretty well, and it serves the purpose; even if I do still have a breakpoint to make sure it doesn't delete anything its not supposed to.

I know people are saying that there are other applications out there (like [EphPod](#) or [Anapod Explorer](#)) that can replace iTunes for getting music on your iPod, and while this is true, these other applications did one of two things:

- “ 1. screwed up my iPod's internal database, and rendered my iPod incompatible with iTunes, or
- 2. couldn't do (or be configured to do) what I wanted them to do, in which case they were really no better than iTunes.

The third major problem with the iPod/iTunes one-two punch to the sack was that once your music is on the pod, there is no supported way to get it off and back onto your computer. There *are* some applications that can help you with that problem, though. They include, but are not limited to the afore-mentioned EphPod and Anapod Explorer, as well as [SharePod](#), and [YamiPod](#). From what I've read, older versions of the iPod just stored your music in a hidden folder on the iPod itself, that was clearly visible when you turned on the "hard drive" option. In the iPod with video, however, the files are placed seemingly randomly into folders named F00 to F49, and the filenames are munged into random 4-letter strings, i.e., MMSJ.mp3. The programs I mentioned will read the appropriate information from the iTunesDB file on the iPod and rename the files according to artist, album, etc., when you copy the files off.

So, after all that, if you still want an iPod, I think you'll be happy. The iPod itself is a great device, and I highly recommend it. iTunes can go suck an egg.

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-04-06 at 00:20:19.

OMG!!! This baby seal is so cute

babyseal.jpg

And I'm willing to bet that it's just as delicious.

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-04-03 at 23:43:59.

Red carpet at the Junos

Through some good fortune, I was able to attend the red carpet ceremony at the Juno awards. I borrowed [Ray](#)'s camera, which he was nice enough to lend me, and got some [fairly decent shots of the musicians](#) as they walked down the red carpet Argyle Street.

If anyone TiVo'ed, or otherwise recorded the red carpet E-Talk Daily portion of the Junos, I would love to get a copy because I was on camera several times, and I want some screenshots ;)

I need your guys' help though. Since I don't have cable TV, I actually had no idea who the people were that I was taking pictures of. I need you guys to help me identify the people in the photos. So please comment on the photos or add notes to them.

[JunoPam.jpg](#)

The part that sucked was the 4 fucking hours standing out in the cold waiting for the CTV assholes to get the ball rolling. I'm not typically a star-chaser, but the opportunity presented itself, and well, I'm a citizen journalist ;)

And to the fucker in the black hat who was right in front of me blocking the coolest shots I could have taken with his above-the-shoulder hands and his big fat head, you can go to hell.

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-04-03 at 10:05:58.

Eastlink wireless trial

For a while now, I've been noticing wireless hotspots around downtown called "Eastlink WiFi Trial #16" or something like that. I've tried connecting to them, but to no avail. Well, just today, I got an email from eastlink:

“*Dear EastLink Customer,*

EastLink is currently conducting a Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi) trial in various locations [throughout the Halifax peninsula](#).

In order for our Wi-Fi trial to be successful, it's important that we receive feedback from our customers. As a valued EastLink High Speed Internet customer, we would like to extend the invitation for you to participate in this innovative trial and provide your feedback to us about the service.

If you have a laptop or PDA that is wireless compatible you can access the service. Since it's in a test phase, the signal could be intermittent and technical support will not be available. Customers should note this connection is not secure and therefore, caution should be exercised when exchanging or accessing personal information.

While there is no cost to you for accessing this service, we request that you provide a response to our brief on-line survey and offer feedback about your experiences. The survey is designed to gather information on who used the service and why (i.e. work, recreation, educational). To view coverage areas, visit <http://wifi.eastlink.ca>.

Thank you and we hope you will enjoy EastLink's Wi-Fi trial.

Regards,

*Ian Lezama
Director of Marketing
EastLink*

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-03-28 at 12:09:41.

WTF is up with iTunes?

So, I picked up an iPod last week (which I'm still planning to blog about later, a little more in-depth) with my tax return money, and I decided to give iTunes a go as my primary music player. I know I always seem to have these fucked up problems, but this one is fairly extreme. My normal, everyday MP3s [play all fucked up in iTunes](#), and only in iTunes. They play just fine in Winamp, Windows Media Player, and on the iPod itself.

Has anyone ever experienced this? If you know anybody that can help me out, I'm running iTunes 6.0.4.2 on Windows XP Professional with SP2. I'm usually the guy to answer people's technical questions, not ask them, but I'm really stumped in this case.

Edit: I was finally able to fix the problem after being pointed to [this support article on apple.com](#).

Originally posted on Friday, 2006-03-24 at 18:00:30.

Knee in my Package

It's tax time, and you just have to deal with it.

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-03-23 at 11:00:29.

Me on Electric Circus

I didn't want this video to get lost, so I stuck it up on [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com). It's from back in 1999 when I was on electric circus:

Originally posted on Saturday, 2006-03-18 at 22:00:13.

Anti-war protest hits downtown Halifax

Apparently some people were [planning a big anti-war protest](#) for Saturday around noon. I was just coming out of the farmer's market as it was getting started, so naturally, I whipped out my trusty camera and [started taking pictures and a video](#). Sorry about the quality of the video, it looks much better on my computer than on YouTube.

[114349497_b36b1e2248_m.jpg](#)

After they walked past me on Lower Water Street, I went to get my car, but I lost them. However, I was pretty sure they'd head for Spring Garden Road, since that's where they'd cause the most disruption. I beat them there and got some more photos ;)

Originally posted on Saturday, 2006-03-18 at 21:00:06.

St. Patrick's Day 2006

[114218571_504e94db97_m.jpg](#)

What a blast I had on St. Patrick's Day. It started off with breakfast at the Old Triangle. I got there at 07h55, and [the place was already packed](#). Brent joined me soon after that, and we sat down for a bite. Being as crowded as it was, it took a while before one of the wait staff even brought us menus. After that, we waited about 30 minutes, and nobody ever spoke to us again. I flagged down the next person I saw, and explained the situation. Luckily, it happened to be one of the owners of the place and he really got the ball rolling for us ;) About 3 minutes later, we were eating bacon and eggs and drinking Guinness.

Then I had to go to work :(

After work, we headed to the Fife and Drum, the hotel bar of the [Casino Nova Scotia Hotel](#). It was also quite full, but thankfully, we had some intrepid seat-savers working for us. The Guinness flowed until around 22h30, when the more sober among us migrated to Gus' Pub to hear [the band](#) of [a friend](#) of [a friend](#) that was playing there.

Around midnight, we went for pizza and called it a night.

Originally posted on Saturday, 2006-03-18 at 20:50:03.

Capsaicin cures prostate cancer

Holy flamin' hoop, Batman! Reuters is reporting on a study that concluded [Hot peppers kill prostate cancer cells](#). In the war of [capsaicin](#) (the chemical that makes peppers hot) vs. prostate cancer cells, the hot stuff won 80% of the time. That's huge.

However, 95% of men said they'd rather have prostate cancer than squeeze a habanero up their fudge tunnel.

Originally posted on Friday, 2006-03-17 at 10:17:23.

Our little Flashy is getting married

Congratulations to Spine.cx's own [Flashy](#) and [Triad](#) who are getting married sometime in April. Sorry, but I forget the exact date. Here, [Flashy looks absolutely absorbing](#) in her TP wedding dress:

[111647057_816856d64f.jpg](#)

Originally posted on Sunday, 2006-03-12 at 23:41:31.

Superfriendz @ the Grawood

For anyone who didn't attend the Superfriendz show at the Grawood this past Saturday night, you missed a good show. I took [some pictures](#). I also picked up their original cassette release "Sticktoitiveness", which they re-released on CD, and their 2003 release "Love Energy" which I didn't even know existed until now.

[111398495_88ae47233c.jpg](#)

Originally posted on Sunday, 2006-03-12 at 13:10:38.

Danko Jones - Sleep is the Enemy

I picked up an actual CD for the first time in a long while this week. Every time I heard that [Danko Jones](#) has put out a new album, I just have to pick it up. The last one was non-stop rock fest of epic proportions, and their new one, [Sleep is the Enemy](#) is much of the same. It is hard-driving, solid-core, rock and roll from start to finish. It's well-produced, great-sounding, and adjective-hyphenated.

[sleepistheenemy.gif](#)

I have sent off an email to the only online contact I could find to try and secure permission to play a song or two on [the podcast](#), so hopefully I'll hear back soon, so you can all get a taste.

In summary, [buy this album](#).

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-03-09 at 23:22:01.

Google Calendar is coming

You had to think this was coming. Google is developing a [web calendaring application](#) that will be closely integrated with Gmail. I'm psyched. There really hasn't been a great solution for a calendar that is available on the internet. The closest so far has been [30Boxes.com](#), but I have high hopes for "CL2" (the project's code name).

cl21.gif

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-03-08 at 19:35:28.

Maternity Leave (Fucking CTV)

Fucking CTV. Why would you change the time of the best show that you have on your fucking station? Why would you force me to find out about this change in time by accident? If it weren't for getting my television shows from the internet, I would be that much more pissed off at you.

Anyway, *Maternity Leave*. This show gave us a shit ton of insight into some long-running questions like "What happened to Claire when she was kidnapped by Ethan?" "Was Ethan affiliated with the Zeke and the guys on the boat?" "Is Rousseau's daughter Alex still with the Others?" Tremendous.

Edit - This article also has the prestigious honour of being article #1000 on spine.cx. Neat.

Because of fucking CTV, I missed the first 15 minutes of this episode, but from what I understand, it just set the stage for what was to come, and wasn't extremely critical. The important things to note is that Aaron (Claire's baby) gets sick, and Claire starts to remember things that happened to her when she was kidnapped.

As she starts to remember, we experience the memories as flashbacks -- the first flashbacks we've yet seen that actually occur *on* the island. Rousseau shows up and Kate comes along, and the show basically turns into a big celebration of girl power. Which is fine, because they're hot. Claire remembers that before she got on the plane (or maybe she just thought it was then, because she was pretty drugged up), ETHAN injected her with some 'medicine' for her baby. She also has some rapid-fire flashbacks showing that they injected her (and baby) with some sort of shit (looking suspiciously like the stuff that Desmond injected himself with in the season premiere), and she thinks that finding out just what that is might be a good thing. Also, is it just me, or is Libby getting hotter?

Kate, Claire and Rousseau take off to find Claire's elusive 'medicine', and as they walk, Claire remembers more and more and eventually remembers where the entrance is to A NEW DHARMA HATCH!!! This one has the familiar octagonal logo, only with the [medicinal symbol](#) on there.

The best thing though, is that we find out that Zeke and his rag-tag band of Others are really just normal people with fake beards and Relic hats. It's also interesting to note that all the planes on the mobile of airplanes above the baby's crib were from Oceanic Airlines.

Questions for the next episode: Why was the Dharma Medical hatch abandoned? Was it just me, or was the guy in the vault in the hatch REALLY fucking with Locke? He's trying the ol', "You're not going to let that other guy boss you around" ploy to try to turn Jack and Locke against each other...something they probably would have done on their own if it weren't for Sawyer stealing the guns. How the fuck did Eko know about the prisoner in the hatch? Dharma hatches: 3 down, 3 to go.

This show really got me excited again about the mythos of Lost. We just need another show about the black smoke and it'll all be back on track.

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-03-02 at 10:29:46.

Public hearings on buildings extended

They are extended the public hearings on the [two buildings](#) proposed for the old tex-park site. There will be another hearing on next **Tuesday, March 7th**. Anyone else feel like going down and voicing an opinion?

I just heard some of the opposition to these buildings on [Information Morning](#) and I was overcome by rage at the lack of vision of some of these people. Maybe we'll kick in a Sunday shopping dig while we're there, eh? :)

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-03-01 at 08:02:44.

Time to do my taxes

I calculated my taxes and all that jazz, and by my calculations (actually, the calculations of [UFile.ca](#)), I'm getting approximately \$343 back from our new Conservative government. I am seriously thinking about picking up a piece of technology from [Apple](#) in the form of an [iPod](#). The real question is: Should I pick up a [4 gig iPod Nano](#) or a [30 gig iPod Video](#)?

Both of them have merits and drawbacks. I shall compare and contrast the two.

videovsnano.jpg

The iPod Nano vs. the iPod Video

First, the obvious difference is the amount of storage space: 4 vs. 30 gigs. Now the video part of the iPod video doesn't really matter to me so much because it can only play video specifically formatted for the iPod. All the video I have is encoded with the either the Divx;) or Xvid codecs, and I'll probably never buy any video from iTunes. The extent of the video playing ability that I'll probably use is playing video podcasts and enjoying the size of the screen for browsing the directories. On the flip side, 4 gigs is quite a lot of space for music. If you consider that music encoded at a reasonable bitrate (read: way fucking higher than 128 kbps), you can still fit at least 40 albums in 4 gigs of space.

Second, the size is **vastly** different. The Nano is *tiny* -- about as long as a credit card is wide, not much thicker, and less heft than a pocket full of change. The Video has a harddrive. Because of that, it has to have a bigger battery. Because of **that**, it has to have a larger physical housing to contain all that goodness.

The real argument, though, is whether to get an iPod at all. In my opinion, there are two main drawbacks to iPods in general:

1. Lack of expandability. There is no way to upload a new codec to an iPod. I can't make it play [Ogg Vorbis](#) or Xvid. This is a pretty serious drawback because even though MP3 has been a standard for music for several years, it's not the end. Just like everything gets replaced (vinyl, cassette tapes, and CDs), so shall MP3 eventually be surpassed by some better format, and your old trusty iPod won't be able to play it.

2. No lossless format. In [iTunes](#), you can't buy a losslessly-encoded version of a song. If Apple hopes to have downloaded music replace physical media, they are going to have to start offering content *of the same quality* that you can get on a CD. The iPods say in their spec sheets that they can play something called "Apple Lossless" format, but I've never seen it. This could be due to my

ignorance of Apple technology in general, but I've bought a song or two from iTunes, and I've never been presented with the option to download a lossless copy of the song.

Those are my thoughts on the Nano vs. Video iPod. What do you guys think I should get, and why?

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-02-27 at 10:50:46.

Out on Saturday night

Fun times had by all. Even Matt the Pimp.

[101619632_159c3846e9.jpg](#)

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-02-22 at 09:32:30.

The Long Con

This episode was good in terms of character development, but really did nothing to advance the mythos of the island. If you listened to the [official Lost podcast](#), you'd know that they said this episode was basically about making Sawyer look like a badass again because up until this point, he had been turning into a big puss.

It was interesting, but really didn't tell us much we didn't already know. Probably the most interesting parts were (a) the fact that Charlie has gone all Anakin Skywalker, and (b) now the two big leaders on the island, Jack and Locke, don't really trust each other anymore. I think that one of two things could happen: Either everyone will band together and beat the crap out of Sawyer or (more probably, in my opinion) the entire situation will implode and there will be mass chaos. Whatever happens, I'm sure the Others will love it.

Originally posted on Friday, 2006-02-10 at 14:02:16.

Great blonde joke

I haven't heard a good blonde joke in a long time, but [this one is hilarious](#). Let me know what you think. I laughed out loud.

Originally posted on Saturday, 2006-02-04 at 13:16:49.

Motorist attacks bike courier

Bernie sent me this remarkable account of pedestrian journalism from Toronto. [A photoblogger](#) caught [some shots of a motorist attacking a bicycle courier](#) going down. Apparently they were so good, the [Toronto Star](#) stole them and used them as their own. Shame on them.

Anybody on here ever experienced this kind of road rage?

[WhenMotoristsAttack.jpg](#)

Photo by [Hool](#)

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-02-02 at 21:51:49.

Stephen Harper is weird

I'm watching the news last night, and inevitably, there is a story about Stephen Harper, and how he's the prime minister designate and about to take office and everything. That's all well and good. The weird part comes when they show a shot of him dropping his kids off at school, and as they're about to go inside, he *shakes their hands*.

Who the fuck shakes their kids hands?! Seriously, if you're not going to give your kids a hug, don't bother to fucking shake their hands, it just makes you look like an even bigger douche than you already are. He and his wife have probably had sex exactly twice: one for each child. They also probably sleep in separate beds like on *Leave it to Beaver*.

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-01-26 at 10:40:49.

Fire and Ice

Overall, I think this was a fairly boring episode, but I think we can glean some fairly significant revelations from it, the least of which being Charlie's background. I think this episode, even though it seemed to center around Charlie, was really alluding to something else entirely.

I don't want to spoil anybody, so click inside for the full story.

So, if Charlie's not using heroin, and we have no reason to assume that he did use, why the fuck is he having crazy-vivid hallucinations? The only other time I can remember something similar happening to anybody on the island was when Boone hurt himself and Locke made this salve out of some plants and shit. Boone had this wacko island acid trip not dissimilar to Charlie's. So, my theory is that Locke slipped Charlie some of the crazy salve somehow, maybe made more potent by the heroin (I'm sure he knew about it long before he "found" it in this episode...Locke is just like that).

Why would Locke want to do that? Well, I don't think I blogged about it, but one of my thoughts about Locke is that he has no allegiance to the other crash survivors. He's totally into the island, and he'd do whatever the island asked him to do. The island is his god. I foresee that sometime in the future Locke is going to defect to the Others. Now, I'll ask again, why would Locke want to drug Charlie? I think the answer is that he wanted to do exactly what he did, make Charlie lose face in front of Claire. Locke is subtly trying to work his way in with Claire in order to eventually take Aaron himself. He'll justify it by telling himself, "It's for the island." This will ultimately lead to a confrontation of the "Man of Faith" (Locke) vs. the "Man of Science" (Jack) and the other Man of Faith (Eko).

Furthermore, why is Locke keeping the heroin locked up in the safe? Why doesn't he just destroy it? Maybe he really likes porcelain statues? And why did he change the combination to the safe? Who knew that combination besides him and Jack?

Another curious happening in this episode was Hurley and Libby's conversation. If Libby was in the tail section of the plane, and Hurley was in the front section, and Hurley was the last person on the plane, then how did Hurley step on Libby's foot? I think Libby is lying, but I'm not sure why.

Why in the hell is Eko marking trees? I have no idea.

I have heard through the grape vine that there is no new episode next week, but instead they will be re-broadcasting "The Numbers" episode. The new episode in two weeks will apparently be closely related to that.

Originally posted on Thursday, 2006-01-26 at 10:35:17.

I have the biggest ego on the internet

According to [EgoSurf.org](#), I outrank just about everybody else with whatever criteria they use to determine ego. I think it has to do with how many search results for [Steve Dinn](#) come back with [spine.cx](#) links.

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-01-24 at 14:48:43.

Election Babble

[I took the test on PoliticalCompass.org](#) and I found myself to be quite left-leaning. But the more I listen to and read about what the NDP have to say this time around, the more I find myself wanting to vote Liberal again.

I would definately rather have a party in power that knows who its corrupt members are than a party that just hasn't found them yet.

[88906971_5b924ce8e9.jpg](#)

Originally posted on Friday, 2006-01-20 at 09:31:27.

Two-Tiered Milk

I was in the grocery store today to pick up some milk, and I found that when I got to the cooler there was something different...something I did not expect. There was a new type of milk, and I wasn't in the loop. I don't like it when this sort of shit goes down in **my** fucking grocery store and I don't know about it. What the fuck is the purpose of all those fliers I get every week if they're not going to let me know about new types of milk?

“ 87659852_a2d6f332a9.jpg

WTF is "Farmers Choice"? I think this province is moving towards a two-tiered milk system. The rich will get the "choice" milk while the rest of us will have to settle for the crap.

So, I did some research, and as it turns out, [Farmers Choice](#) is a type of milk with some crazy Omega crap in it, and it costs 50 cents more per carton.

If I were an alarmist, I would say that we now have a two-tiered milk system. The rich pay their extra 50 cents and get their crazy Omega-nutrient, and the rest of us stay with the old cow juice and whatever crazy disease that Omega crap stops you from getting.

I, for one, welcome our new OmegaCow overlords.

Originally posted on Tuesday, 2006-01-17 at 00:14:15.

The opening of Sensations

Matt, Jay, and I checked out the grand opening of Sensations last night. [The protesters were there in spades](#) sporting some nice signs. There were supporters there too, which was nice to see. We waited outside in line for about 20 minutes. I'm sure they made us wait just so the news crews would not just be filming protesters because it wasn't that crowded inside.

I had never been inside any of the other incarnations of this bar (Crazy Horse, Little Nashville), but it was nicer inside than Ralph's. I hope it does well. There were more people around in that area of town than I had ever seen before. I can't help but think the bar will be good for surrounding businesses.

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Originally posted on Saturday, 2006-01-14 at 19:26:33.

Monitor envy

I just got [a new monitor](#), and I'm very happy with it. However, as happy as I am, I am still easily made jealous when I see [pictures like this](#).. This dude can go to hell :) I can't imagine how much all that cost...especially since it's all [Apple](#) brand stuff, except for that lonely [Dell](#) in the corner.

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The 23rd Psalm

It's good to finally get a new episode of Lost after what was an agonizing break over Christmas with nothing. Lots of interesting things happened in the episode. We see the monster, we get an Eko flashback, and there are even some Sawyer shots for the ladies.

I would really like to pick up the Lost podcast that I was doing before, and I've been talking to [Matt](#) about doing it with me. So, if you enjoyed [the first one](#), then there may be more coming.

Don't click into this story if you haven't seen the show on 11 January 2006 and don't want spoilers.

Charlie's heroin statue comes back into play. I've been waiting for them to delve into that issue again. I think Claire's being a bit of a bitch about the whole thing though...I mean, obviously things in Charlie's life have changed a bit since, oh, I don't know, BEING STRANDED ON A FUCKING DESERTED ISLAND. I think she should give him a break. He's always had Aaron's best interests at heart. But at the same time, it did seem quite curious that he has a stash of a pile of Mary statues in a hole. Fucking wanker.

Mr. Eko rocks. I had heard that we were going to get to see a flashback of him and I was really looking forward to it. There were rumours floating around for a while that he was involved with the Nigerian drug plane, but they were pretty much quashed when the episode "The Other 48 Days" showed that he was, in fact, on Flight 815. I was happy to see that he was kicking ass right from childhood. Mr. Eko is one bad dude, and that's just the way it is. He's one of my favourite characters in the show along with Locke.

Finally, we get to see the monster that's been terrorizing the inhabitants of the island from the day they got there. To be fair, we have seen it before, but it was not clear that the black smoke that appeared to be pulling Locke into a sinkhole in the jungle was the same thing that was chasing the islanders around all the time and devouring pilots. This explains why Locke was not afraid when he was being pulled down the hole in Season 1. He had seen the creature before. He faced it - stared it down. Interesting to see how Locke and Eko had the exact same reaction when faced with the creature. I think these two have very much in common, that we aren't quite aware of just yet.

Michael asked to Locke to allow him access to the guns in the hatch. Then he asked to take Kate's shift watching the numbers, and of course, he goes and tries to fucking MSN Walt again. Seriously, WTF. Where the hell does he think the other end of this reject computer from the 1970s is? This isn't exactly Messenger we're talking about here. Unfortunately, we didn't get to see the last thing that Walt (if it really was Walt) types to Michael. We know that he wants Michael to come and get him, but is it really one of the Others? I think next episode we'll see Michael going off half-cocked in a solo attempt to save Walt like a fucking retard. I noted that on [IMDB](#), [Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje](#) has been

added to the cast, but [Malcolm David Kelley](#) has been marked as 2004 - 2005. Does this mean that we've seen the last of Walt? Even creepy wet Walt in spooky visions? I guess time will tell.

Originally posted on Wednesday, 2006-01-11 at 23:46:06.

My wierd-shit-o-meter is pegged

[My computer bit me.](#) I was picking up my server machine, and I guess I caught my finger on a sharp piece of metal because I sliced 'er right open. Bled like a sonofabitch. Now that sucked, but it wasn't even the weirdest part. I went to my dad's for supper that night, and I found out that both my brother and my dad had both cut their fingers that day as well. That's weird. I guess things really do happen in threes.

My brother had a similar injury to me...seems working with computers is inherently dangerous. My dad actually had to get 5 stitches after slicing up the side of his finger on the jagged edge of an opened can.

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Speaking my dad's injury, it was purely because of the kind of can-opener he used. It slices the entire top off the can, including the rim, rather than just opening it. I don't know, it's hard to describe, but I think you can see what I'm getting at. I will never use the kind that cuts the entire top off the can because I thought the edge it left was quite unsafe...turns out I was correct.

Originally posted on Monday, 2006-01-09 at 12:03:02.