



BITS AT THE EDGE

PADMASREE WARRIOR



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Who moved my black tie?

December 16, 2006

'Tis the season!

The time of the year when celebrations, fundraisers, business roundtables, office bashes, "networking" forums - all seem to assume the form of dressy soirees with a grand 12 course feast accompanied by spectacular wines and decadent desserts. Between October and December, the tempo for these "black tie" events (uh... so called to imply a decorum of class, I presume?) also seems to rise to a crescendo. All of which puts new kinks in my already muddled brain. Why are these labeled "black tie" anyway (seriously!?), when at least half the attendees (namely, women) never wear one or even have the remote desire to own one? Beats me!

Since one must be a good sport about this, one is. Hence, I don my loyal [LBD](#), step into 5 inch killer stilettos, slip on double strands of pearls with matching ear studs to complete the uniform, and hop from one haute event to another.

I am not complaining, honest. It's just that I have a few ideas ...

1. Can we be practical and exchange business cards, please? I know it is not elegant to be fishing for white cardboard rectangles in Swarovski studded clutches or stingray skin wallets. BUT, after hours of shaking hands and smiling, I can't remember if the person I was chummy with for the past half hour said they are a private investor or a private investigator. This never happens to you? Come on!

2. Can we please not "commence" with a "cocktail hour" at 6 pm? Who leaves work before 7 pm, anyway? Things like - end of the fiscal quarter, budget forecasts, financial plans, technology roadmaps sorta take over. Oh by the way, if you live in Chicago land (or New York or Boston or the Bay area or London or Paris or New Delhi or Shanghai ...) forget about getting anywhere before 8 pm unless you begin the freeway expedition to fight traffic at 3 pm. And one more thing, can the cocktail "hour" not last more than 60 minutes? Because you see, by this time most people in high heels (hmm, that would be practically all the women in the crowd) are just dying to sit down - somewhere, anywhere. Ouch!

3. Err... I know this sounds corny, but if these must be on weekday evenings (when most people are working or running around getting their kids to finish homework or both), can we pick a place with "changing rooms"? No, I don't mean diaper changing rooms, I mean like locker rooms. Why can't the Ritz or Four Seasons install some "black tie locker rooms"? These would be so functional for working folks that are sleep deprived or jet lagged yet shamming to look like they just stepped out of a day spa after a [microdermabrasion](#) followed by an [aromatherapy](#) facial. Funny? Not when I am in a tizzy trying to figure where I am going to change out of my mundane work clothes into Cinderella couture. Can't use my office, small problem - has glass panels. This is one project where opacity, not transparency is highly desirable. Ok stop! I did try the women's restroom - ridiculous idea! Ever tried to slip out of a business suit, squeeze into a dress, change shoes, coax on make up, clasp jewelry, do your hair - all this at [warp speed](#), with fingers crossed hoping no woman (or man for that matter!) that works for or with you, walks into the restroom and wonders whether you are trying out for the juggling act at [Cirque du Soleil](#). Not good! Yep, I did try checking into a hotel room close to the venue to get ready for the do. Nope, it is not a pleasant experience when the strange guy behind the front desk raises a quizzical eyebrow as you check out within just one hour, after spending an ungodly amount for the room. Ever feel infuriated but can't stop that blush from creeping up your neck and face? I know that feeling.

4. Here is another one - can we not test people's IQ with clever "dress codes"? For the life of me, I cannot discern the delicate balance between formalwear, cocktail dress and holiday attire. And what on earth is "smart casual"? Heck, I am never smart and always casual.

Few tips assuming you have miraculously solved all of the aforementioned problems. If you are

While I Was Mobiling

MOMA

I was at the [MOMA](#) in New York City last week discussing the impact of design, science and technology on the human life. I was visiting MOMA after a long absence and had forgotten what a beautiful, serene and inspiring place MOMA is! [This](#) is one of my favorites and [these](#) are the must see floors. Stay tuned for some exciting new exhibits!

A*STAR

[A*STAR](#) is a strategic constellation in Singapore to drive world-class scientific research in many fields including pharma, biotech, chemical, electronics and infocomms. It is under the auspicious of the Singapore Ministry of Trade and Industry. I [recently joined the Board](#) of A*STAR and am very impressed at how the entire country is led and operates like an global innovative technology company.

Technology Policy Summit

I spoke at the [Technology Policy summit](#) recently, where discussions ranged from innovation strategies to immigration to everybody's favorite - DRM. Of course, what is a policy summit these days without the usual Net neutrality debate! [Esther Dyson](#) and I chatted about the future of mobility, the influence of cell phones in emerging markets, the intersection between telecom and internet, and the implications of all this on regulation and policy. You can read about and watch some

Womenomics

Womenomics



Makes some great points. I LOVE the last sentence.

Good start



Promising!

New home?

New planet



Just 20 years to get there at light speed. This may be what we'll have to do if we don't take care of our present home

Music box

Music Box



"The rhythm is gonna get you".

OMG

Spelling Bee



Wow - new kind of spelling bee :-)

Pipe Organ

Pipe Organ



Music, art, nature - its all science!

Like a human

Learn like a human



Very interesting

XXXI Olympiad

Olympics



It's gotta be Chicago over L.A any day!

Brrr



This is spring in Chicago :-)

Pain, no gain



I need an excuse not to work out :-)

Hybrid images

a guest and know the host well - bribe them (just do it!) to seat you next to someone you actually like. If not, the entire evening will be spent in perfunctory small talk about your job, the weather, origin of your name, color of your skin, country of birth etc. And you will spend an inordinate amount of energy staying clear of interesting topics like religion, politics, technology and whatever else! If you don't know the host well, then scope out the general direction of the women's restroom. You can always escape to "[powder your nose](#)" whenever you feel tears of boredom swell up. This only works if you are a woman, of course. If you are a man - sorry I have no ideas for you, but I do empathize with your plight.

By happenstance if you are the host or have "bought" a table, don't invite people that you would drive out of state to avoid. I mean, don't just check the boxes in alphabetical order by last name to fill up seats, you will repent it. It will become one of those things that you wish you had paid more attention to, like that Language Arts grammar and structure class in middle school.

Not to worry, help is on the way. Technology will transform the [future of fashion](#). I share this [vision](#) for "black tie" events in 2010. Now, that's [haute!](#)

Meantime, excuse-mois, while I search for my black tie in the women's restroom.



Comments | [Add Comment](#)

Posted By: Ashitha Ambadi (08/01/2007 3:21:14 PM)

Comment: I just chanced upon this blog and yes, I'm already hooked onto it:) You've a way with words that convey the facts and at the same time, that make people laugh. Hats off to you!

Posted By: [Robert Carlson](#) (21/12/2006 5:09:51 PM)

Comment: Your observations are spot on, as I can't stop laughing about the numerous times I have seen executives with that look of fear for a place to change and prepare. Towards the end of a long day, you have added a very large smile to my face, Thanks !!

Posted By: Divya (18/12/2006 12:52:39 PM)

Comment: Such light humor is not what I expected out of a CTO blog! Thanks for making the techno-lingo more accessible. May your tribe increase. Au revoir. - Divya

interesting debates [here](#).

Venture One Outlook

I was happy to see that the conference this year was broader in [scope](#) and the [keynote speakers](#) covered a set of diverse experiences.

Destiny's Dances

I just saw the [Joffrey Ballet's winter program](#) and it is simply fabulous. "[The Green Table](#)" which is a danse macabre in eight scenes conceived by Kurt Joss in Germany between the two world wars is especially powerful. This ballet has been an international classic since 1932. It is a hypnotic depiction of the callousness of war and the ravages of uncontrolled power. Bravo Joffrey, for such a graceful and emotive performance. [The reviews are glowing](#). I highly recommend it (and yes, I am on the Board of Directors of Joffrey Ballet).

3GSM

The [3GSM World Congress](#) keeps getting bigger each year. Over 55,000 people gathered in [Barcelona](#), from industries as diverse as media, entertainment, internet, wired and wireless communications. I am thrilled to see the mobile attract brainpower from start-ups to global giants. Big themes this year are mobile navigation, mobile entertainment and next generation wireless broadband, with heated debates (surprise!), between [WiMax](#), [HSPA+](#), and [LTE](#). In fact, I was on [a panel with leading experts](#) that debated this. We launched [several products](#), my favorite is the [MOTORIZR™ Z8](#). This is [very cool!](#)

Coincidentally

En route to Barcelona from Chicago via London, I was reading the Feb 12th issue of the Financial Times, when I came across this article "[Where did they all go?](#)" Coincidentally, it mentions some of the same issues and opportunities for the "mobile worker" that I wrote about in my Feb 8th post on Enterprise Mobility. Some new data from FT - in Chicago people left more than 80,000 mobile phones in cabs in a six-month period, in London the number is 10,000 a month! Talk about the need for innovation around information security in

Hybrid Images

Fascinating

[Hot young stars](#)

Hot Young Stars



Beautiful neighbor

[American Theocracy](#)

American Theocracy



Great read.

[Too much memory](#)

Science Daily



Why I am so absent minded.

[Math is a team sport](#)



Mapping E8 - 60 GB, small print takes up Manhattan. My alma mater is in Atlas team. [Watch the commendation.](#)

[What a joke!](#)



Pinch me, this can't be ...

[Can't W8 2CU L8R](#)



R u kidN me? NcreDbll
Dis wd drV me %-)

the future of mobile enterprise. [This issue of FT](#) is worth a read, as it contains many informative articles leading up to 3GSM World Congress, one of the largest gatherings in the mobile industry.

En México

I was in Mexico last week participating in strategy meetings held by a key customer. A great way to drive the future towards blending media, internet and mobility is through partnerships. With a population of about 107 million and 25 million households, Mexico is an interesting market. Compared to North America, consumers replace their cell phones more often - on average every 14 months versus 24 months in the US. They also expect to pay more for their next mobile device. The popularity of Spanish language media extends well beyond Latin America all the way to South East Asia, enabled by innovative leaders like [Televisa](#). For instance, [Televisa](#) exports "[Telenovelas](#)" to 120 countries in more than 15 languages. This raises an interesting opportunity for mobile media, for delivering [this content](#) to the "third screen". Telenovelas on a telephone, perhaps?

At CES

I was at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas where we [announced](#) many exciting new products. Eleven of our solutions won awards for innovation in design and engineering. Congrats! It's fun to [watch Ed](#) give his opening keynote by biking up onto the stage. By the way, the technology in the bike that charges a cell phone as you pedal is a clever innovation for the emerging markets from our research Labs. You can read the [media coverage](#) and [watch my podcast](#) for more!

Engineering Honors

The National Academy of Engineering, [NAE](#) announced the engineering profession's highest honors for 2007. Developer of World Wide Web, Father of Biomechanics, and Exceptional Educators are the [winners](#).

Congratulations!

[Did you see this?](#)

"...well done! via [thefischbowl](#)"

[Love to see you mad](#)



Aha! Now I know why some people always make me mad

[Way to go](#)



Congratulations

[Green Chicago River](#)



Happy [St. Patty's Day from Chicago!](#)

[World Cup Cricket](#)

World Cup



Billion of fans are mourning today! [Bangladesh beat India](#) - can there be a bigger upset? [Ireland beat Pakistan](#). Irish fans are ecstatic in Jamaica on St. Patty's Day. No idea what I am talking about? [Read this](#).

[March Madness](#)



World cup cricket and March Madness both at the same time - my household is chaotic.

[Chicago night sky](#)

Explore the World



Cool visualization!

[International Women's Day](#)



[May I buy some vowels?](#)

Last week I was chatting with a fellow passenger at an airport while waiting to catch a plane. She happened to be an English teacher. As we were talking, she got a text message on her mobile that drew a smile and frown at the same time. She turned to me for translation learning that I am a prolific "t~~x~~r". We then started discussing the impact of IM and SMS on the literary skills of youth today. It is inevitable that technology have an influence on the arts and [language](#). But, there is a "word of difference" between [ludicrous](#) and [Ludacris!](#)

[Mixing business with pleasure](#)

Yes, the [MOTOROKR E6](#) allows you to do just that. We recently launched the MOTOROKR E6 at [ITU](#). I love this Linux device which combines PDA business functionality with pure entertainment. You can [read more](#) about our Java Linux strategy from what Guy Martin, one of our technical experts has to say. [Jay Chou](#) learning martial arts from his "phone" to beat his opponent, as seen in this [video](#) is not that far off from the reality of mobile internet experience!

[For some Text Appeal](#)

If you are one of those people that always need a QWERTY and "txt msgs dr u nts"... help is on the way. Try this [dictionary](#) for learning text speak.

[Bodyworlds](#)

I saw [this exhibit](#) the last time it came to the Chicago Science Museum. Blew my mind!! Highly recommend it (I rate it PG 13). Don't miss it, if you live in the Chicagoland or if it comes to a science museum near you! Full disclosure, yes I am a trustee of the Chicago Science Museum and no, that's not why I am recommending the exhibit.

[Out and about](#)

I liked what [Jonathan](#) has to say about [travel light](#). Couldn't agree more!

[On the other side](#)

In India average revenue per

Hope you celebrated with a woman who inspires you! At the least, I hope you didn't fight with a woman today :-)

[Go Big Red!](#)



Awesome.

[Things Fall Apart](#)



From my Alma Mater. I love robotics!

[Equal pay at Wimbledon](#)



About time

[Chocolates, jewelry, cell phones](#)

Chocolate Strap



Hmm

[Mars](#)

NASA



NASA's Reconnaissance Orbiter is set to surpass the record for the most science data returned by any Mars spacecraft. So beautiful!

[Year of the Pig](#)



Happy Chinese New Year!

cellular user is 2 cents per minute and the government targets 85% of the country to have mobile coverage by the end of 2007. 70% of the current 1.1 billion population in India is less than 35 years old.

[When in France](#)

In France, more than 40% of residential fixed traffic is VoIP over DSL. Compared to that, US in 2005 was about 4% VoIP over cable and DSL, in 2006 my gut says this maybe 8% - mostly over cable. In Europe, DSL overwhelms cable 3 or 4:1 vs. about 1:1 in the US. In the US, VoIP over DSL in 2005 was only 0.1% of all fixed-line voice traffic.

[Take a peek](#)

Held our first ever "[Innovation Showcase](#)" open to employees and select external audience. Techies across the company showed off their stuff. In two days, packed with activities we created a lot of [buzz](#), customer interest and employee excitement. Check out some cool new [things](#)!

[With great interest](#)

I recently met some very accomplished [people](#) at The Fortune [Most Powerful Women's summit](#). On one of the panels we debated the [Future of the Internet](#). [Ann Moore's](#) comments about the swim suit issue of Sports Illustrated are a classic in anticipatory demand creation, watch it [here](#).

[Helsinki here I come](#)

Gave a [keynote](#) at the IEEE Personal Indoor Mobile Radio Conference, PIMRC (ouch, that's a mouthful!) in Helsinki, Finland. This is my first visit to Helsinki and Finland for that matter. More sunshine than I expected!

[At Aspen](#)

Was at a roundtable discussion on the "Mobile Generation" at the [Aspen Institute](#). The panel focused on the social and technological implications of the mobile device and how it will transform our future. David writes a nice [summary](#).

[Innovation and Diversity](#)

Net neutrality

Financial Times



I reread this recently. Whether you agree with the point of view or not, you have to respect Prof. Eli Noam's clarity of thought.

Science Talent



For the first time in the Science Talent Search competition's 66-year history, female scientists achieved numerical parity with males.

Prince



Watching the half time show live at the Dolphins Stadium was spectacular! Even the rain didn't put a damper on the energy.

50 in 50

To 50 Innovations



What do the pill, cell phone, prozac and IEEE 802.16 have in common? Check it out!

Your words, Mr. President!



How interesting.

Autoimmune

Autoimmune



It is always exciting to read about progress like

Spoke at [National Center for Women & Information Technology](#). U.S. Department of Labor forecasts that we will add a million IT jobs by 2014. I firmly believe that women will play a strong leadership role in shaping the future in technology. I loved the [blog](#) that [Brad Feld](#) posted. [Lucy Sanders](#) writes more about the NCWIT's first ever [Innovation and Diversity town hall](#). I spoke about Motorola's focus on innovation and diversity combining expertise from fashion, design, technology, engineering and experience marketing. Iconic innovation like the RAZR happens only by being open to diversity of thought.

Blogroll

GigaOM
The Mobile Gadgeteer
Engadget Mobile
The Law of Mobility
Emerging Technology Trends
Cook's Collaborative Edge
Mobility Beat
Techdirt Wireless
Wireless Weblog
Network World

this.

Science teacher

Science Daily



I love this.

China Online

China Online



Amazing growth rates.

Immortal Computing

Seattlepi.com



Not sure I want this?

Women in Tech

silicon.com



This is worrisome.

Too engaged!



I can totally relate to this!
What David writes
about, applies to modern
CTO's as well as
"modern newspaper
people" :-)

MLK

Martin Luther King



Timeless! Always moves
me.

Funny!

Comic

I love it! via [xkcd](#)

The art of tech

Nano Art



So beautiful!

Black diamonds

Black Diamond



A girl's best friend!

Science degrees

Decline



Bad news

Droodle



Next time you are at home - sick and bored, try this.

How the Brain sees



Don't forget, for there may be no vision without memories.

Free will



Oh no, we may be nothing but sophisticated meat machines after all!

[Crochet and Math](#)

Chaotic Craftwork



Just when you thought getting a C in that Home Ec. class was OK!

[Christmas day](#)



Anyone online today?
Guilty as charged.

[Santa](#)

Santa



Finally, children have a scientific basis to believe. And so do I!

[My kinda sled](#)

Sled



Care for a ride at 10,000 Gs?

[Fiction scores!](#)

Eureka



I prefer it in the bath -
Eureka!

Petite Suits

Sunita Williams



Sunita Williams did it!
Over 150 male
astronauts versus only 7
women have done a
space walk, partly
because space suits
don't come in small
sizes. More suits in size
4P, please!

Greetings!

Snow Flake



For the Entrée



Wow, this is a mouthful!
Try some politically
correct crustaceans for
dinner tonight.

Being flexible

Crystal printing



If this works, it will lead
to some amazing new
forms.

Pigs can fly?



OK so it's the squirrels.

That One!



The LBD - every
woman's gotta own at
least one.

The night sky

Discovery

How beautiful is this night sky lit up by the space shuttle Discovery!

[3300 year old murder mystery](#)

King Tut



An unreal blow.

[Bombs and the bees](#)



This one is not for the birds.

[All play no work](#)

These are just plain fun. [Geogreeting](#) (via Brady's post on [O'Reilly Radar](#) and [World Map](#) (via [Chris Sacca](#))).

[Known unknowns...](#)



Definitely not the Rumsfeldian kind! Check out the top 25 unanswered questions in science.

[It thinks, therefore it is](#)

rt



Researchers from my alma mater Cornell University and the University of Vermont made a robot that observed its own motion and then generated its concept of self.

[That new agent steals my breath away!](#)

Robot



No, not quite [Daniel Craig](#)! Researchers at Washington University in St. Louis are using wireless sensor networks with software agents to navigate a robot through simulated fire. Once the agent locates the fire, it clones itself!

Bad science



Since 1660, The Royal Society of London has been a champion to replace unsound thinking about the world with knowledge based observation and experimentation. They are now having to battle unsound thinking about climate change and are being pushed to defend Darwin's theory of evolution. How sad to confuse a "movement" with science.

Mobile phone for internet to the masses



The discussions in the first Internet Governance forum in Athens about abstract political control of content are somewhat moot!

Every step you take, every move you make



Are we sleep-walking into a surveillance society or are we already waking up to it? This report stopped me in my tracks, pun intended!

Lights, phone, action



New ways to create and share, emerging art with emerging technology. Maybe now I can argue that the Sundance Film festival is indeed a tech conference that I should attend.

Future of Computing

Wired



George suggests that the petascale computer will shrink to a teleputer, the successor to today's handhelds, in your ear or in your signal path. "It will link to trillions of sensors around the globe, giving it constant knowledge of the physical state of the world, from traffic conditions to the workings of your bio machine". Can't wait to build that future!

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