

MORNING STORIES TRANSCRIPT

Blogging in Boston: *Programmer Betsy Devine discovers she can use a computer to recapture her experience of life in a small town. Also, an in-studio conversation with the Lascivious Biddies.*

Tony Kahn:

Hi, Everybody. This is Tony Kahn, the producer and director of *Morning Stories* from WGBH in Boston. And today, the darlings of podcasting themselves the Lascivious Biddies.

Lascivious Biddies:

[singing]: Yay! Yay! Yay! Hi!

If I had my truck, I'd go to Minnesota,
And there I'd get a load'a
Stuff to put in my truck . . .

Tony Kahn:

We'll hear them individually a little bit later. [Biddies laugh]

Anyway, *Morning Stories*, the podcast, is about to celebrate its first birthday, but even in those early days when podcasts first walked the earth and the skies were ruled by broadcasts, we here at *Morning Stories* were still interested in the way ordinary people take new technologies and turn them into something of their own. And one of our earliest broadcasts came from a woman named Betsy Devine, a small town resident from Manchester, New Hampshire and Princeton, New Jersey who discovered the power of blogging. She tells us about some of her experience in today's morning story, "Blogging Betsy."

Betsy Devine:

When I moved to the big city of Cambridge from my small town life as a programmer in Princeton, along with my parking sticker and recycling bin, I got a blog. After a week of writing a blog you think, "Funny, it's quiet out there. Could it be that out of millions and millions of internet surfers, not one has noticed you?" After two weeks, if you're lucky, you get email from some guy in Oskaloosa who noticed that you're spelling email wrong. After three weeks you fantasize that some other guy in Oskaloosa read you but just didn't get around to sending you email.

[Sound of modem connecting]

One day, however, I woke up and discovered that something I wrote in my blog had attracted several hundred visitors, many of whom left insightful comments like "Russell

Crowe is hot.” I was writing about a little company that sells sound effects over the web. I discovered them years ago when a computer game I wrote needed some sounds of happy children laughing.

[Sounds of happy children laughing]

I discovered they also sell about twenty-five different sound effects for dropping pieces of armor.

[Sounds of armor dropping]

When, in heaven's name, would you ever need something like that? How could I resist blogging the obvious answer: a gladiator strip tease by Russell Crowe.

[Sound of heavy piece of armor crashing to the ground]

OK. One day after I'd been Boston blogging for a few months, the famous Halley of Halley's Comment announced she was throwing a Boston blogging party. Right after the coldest and longest winter in recent memory she wanted a bunch of strangers to head up to Crane's Beach for sunbathing. First we'd all have fried clams in Essex at Woodman's Restaurant. If it wasn't for the response to Russell Crowe I might have been too shy to go. I mean, Halley was a real blogger, with thousands of readers, and I was a beginner with "ones."

I headed for Woodman's restaurant where I met Halley, who looked exactly like her photos all over the blog world, and a young guy in a blue Hawaiian shirt, who turned out to be Scott Johnson, one of the authors of the book about blogging I kept right next to my computer. He had recently started a little blog search engine called "Feedster." We sat down around a wooden table at Woodman's, looked at each other and laughed. It was like two different ways of knowing someone coming together, the kind of knowing that comes from reading and reflection. The kind that comes from the give and take of real-time human conversation.

Then we drove to the beach and talked and talked some more, as above us seagulls flitted near and far and, for all I know, talked and blogged too.

[Seagull sounds]

Now, six months or so later, Scott hired me to work with him at Feedster and last week I took a bit of time off to drive Halley to the doctor for minor eye surgery. Haven't heard from my fan in Oskaloosa for a while. Maybe he got his own blog, in which case I owe him a visit. In the meantime, why not start your own blog, for getting out word of yourself and for the serendipity of all the people who drop by. And, speaking of serendipity, let's end with a moment of sound effects "seren-drop-ity."

“Ladies, gentlemen, children – here for his first and last virtual appearance, Russell Crowe and his gladiator striptease!”

[“The Stripper” music plays. Betsy continues to describe, as each sentence is accompanied by the appropriate sound effect.]

He puts down the large shield.

There goes his helmet.

One boot comes off.

Woah! The other boot comes off.

There goes the chain mail armor.

There goes the leather armor. Children, leave the room! [laughs heartily]

[“The Stripper” continues, then fades]

Tony Kahn:

By the way, did I tell you that her husband Frank had a pretty good year, too, Gary Mott?

Gary Mott:

Her husband Frank?

Tony Kahn:

He won the Nobel Prize in physics, I believe.

Gary Mott:

That’s right! You can buy a lot of bandwidth with that kind of money, yeah.

Tony Kahn:

Today, the darlings of podcasting themselves, the Lascivious Biddies. I’ve heard them on Adam Curry’s show and they were and, I think deep in his heart, still remain his favorite independent music group. So welcome, ladies.

Ladies

Lady 1: Thank you. It’s been quite a journey for us because when we first heard about it we just sent Adam some songs to play on the Daily Sourcecode and we saw that immediately reflected in our record sales.

Lady 2 (Saskia):

Podcasting has been incredible for us (this is Saskia speaking) [all laugh] It’s just allowed us to reach such a broader global audience. And we’ve formed relationships with people in a completely new way.

Tony Kahn:

Give me an example.

Saskia:

Well, people are listening – are learning about us via podcasting as opposed to via a live performance or even sort of, “Here, listen to this band that I like.” And so it’s almost like they know us already. And whenever anyone says, “We heard of you, you know, via your podcast or anything,” we go, “YAY!” It immediately bonds us to them as well. I mean, it feels like there is a togetherness that I haven’t felt in a while in other mediums. And --

Lee Ann:

I think the thing that struck me personally was – as Saskia said – is that we started receiving emails from England and Sweden and Bangkok and we’ve got listeners in China and Japan. People that we would not, at this stage in our career, we would not have been able to reach otherwise. And as the techie member of the band I can go and see where their servers are located.

Tony Kahn:

I see. I see.

Amanda:

The other thing – we also have podcast, fellow podcast friends, now. And, you know, we all sort of communicate via our podcasts. Like, “Oh! Well, Podcast Paul just emailed us and this is what he said!” And then he’ll respond to our, you know, to our podcast. So it’s like this other, other conversation that’s happening via podcasts.

Gary Mott:

Are you all lifelong New Yorkers?

Ladies

None of us. No.

Gary Mott:

I smell a bit of Midwest in somebody here.

Deirdre:

Uh-oh.

Ladies:

It’s Northwest. Sorry. [all laugh] Idaho.

Gary Mott:

Idaho.

Tony Kahn:

What is it, Gary? What did you pick up on?

Gary Mott:

There's a New York "thing" that you just can smell people who are lifelong New Yorkers.

Tony Kahn:

"Smell" may be the wrong sense to be...

[All laugh]

Lee Ann:

I know what you mean, but I'm from Texas and I can definitely ... after I meet somebody from Texas I'm like "I knew I liked you."

Tony Kahn:

Lee Ann Westover, meet Gary Mott from Texas.

Lee Ann:

Yeah? Where are you from?

Gary Mott:

I'm from San Antonio.

Lee Ann:

Aww - I'm from Houston.

Gary Mott:

No kidding!

Lee Ann:

That's what you smelled. It was me.

[Someone: Liz is not sure who]:

That's right!

[Everybody laughs]

Gary Mott:

Born and raised.

Lee Ann:

Yeah? Me too. It went to UT-Austin.

Gary Mott:

My dad went to A&M.

Lee Ann:

Ohhh ... The rival.

[one of the ladies start's singing, "Getting to Know You . . . "]

Tony Kahn:

[laughing] I'm going to cry . . . tears in my eyes . . .

Ladies sing:

Well it's been six long years
Since I moved to the city,
And in six long years
I've had stars in my eyes
And in six long years
Nothin's ever been as pretty
As the big yellow sun
In the blue Texas sky.
You can take the girl out of Texas, . . .

Tony Kahn:

Painful as it is to withdraw from this conversation, I want to talk about some other developments that have been happening. We're going to be doing an interview soon with Dan Klass. He's the host of *The Bitterest Pill*, which is a terrific podcast and they're featured along with *Morning Stories* on the Apple iTunes page this week. And also Duke University - get a load of this - Duke University is going to have the first academic podcast symposium.

Ladies:

Wow! Wow, wow. How do we get there and how do we play at it? [they laugh]

Tony Kahn:

It's gonna be September 27th to the 28th of this year. I'm going to be there. Believe it or not, I will be presenting a paper.

Ladies

You academic! Fantastic! We're going to get down there.

Tony Kahn:

Are you going to be there? Come on by! And those of you -

Ladies:

We are gonna be down there -

Tony Kahn:

Terrific!

Ladies:

Yeah, we will!

Tony Kahn:

So anyway, I want to make sure that you know about what's going on, and, as always, we would like to express our gratitude to our funder, who, no matter where we go, continues to send money right to our address, --

Ladies:

Yay.

Tony Kahn:

for which we're very grateful, and that's Ipswitch, a leader in file transfer software. Want to find out about them, you can go to their website <ipswitch.com> I-P-S-W-I-T-C-H- dot com. Right, Gar?

Gary Mott:

Absolutely. And you know our website. You know it, you love it: <wgbh.org/morningstories> and please send us an email.

Tony Kahn:

With or without cash

Gary Mott:

With or without cash at <morningstories@wgbh.org>.

Tony Kahn:

See ya next week.

[Background: Yee, haw!]

Ladies

Bye.

Tony Kahn:

Ladies, do you have a collective "goodbye"?

Ladies:

[Singing] "Good bye" !

Tony Kahn:

I love improv! [All laugh]

Ladies:

[softly] ...WGBH-Boston

[singing] ... Never far from home

'Cause you can't take Texas out of this girl! No!

You can take the girl out of Texas

Like a flower you can pluck her from her world

Pluck, pluck, pluck, pluck!

But no matter where she roams,

She is never far from home

'Cause you can't take Texas out of the -

Take Texas out of the -

Take Texas out of the girl!

[End of recording]

Transcribed by: Bev Sykes

Note from Transcriber

I was moved by the story of Betsy Devine to check out her blog and ended writing a blog entry of my own about her Russell Crowe experience

<<http://airypersiflage.blogspot.com/2008/01/russell-crowe-is-hot.html>>. My blog is fairly new, a mirror image of the journal I've been keeping since 2000

<<http://www.funnytheworld.com>>. My journal gets a decent number of hits a day, but the blog not so much, because it IS so new. However, the day after I wrote my own Russell Crowe entry, I had a spike of readers twice as large as any day before and discovered the whole thing had been copied to some Russell Crowe fan site. So thanks, *Morning Stories*, and thanks, Betsy Devine, for the inspiration!