

News was the first industry to really feel the impact of the Internet, and we've now had an entire generation grown up with the expectation of being able to have on-demand news on any subject at any time for free. This may be good for news junkies, but it's been hell on the news business. (Pg. 185)

Our culture is a massive popularity contest. Hits have become the lens through which we observe our own culture.

Most of the top fifty best-selling albums of all time were recorded in the seventies and eighties (the Eagles, Michael Jackson), and none of them were made in the past five years. (Pg. 2)

The great thing about broadcast is that it can bring one show to millions of people with unmatched efficiency. But it can't do the opposite — bring a million shows to one person each. Yet that is exactly what the Internet does so well. The economics of the broadcast era required hit shows — big buckets— to catch huge audiences. The economics of the broadband era are reversed. (Pg. 5)

The Long Tail (article) was published in Wired in October, 2004.

The Long Tail is really about the economics of abundance — what happens when the bottlenecks that stand between supply and demand in our culture start to disappear and everything becomes available to everyone. (Pg. 11)

An average movie theatre will not show a film unless it can attract at least 1,500 people over a two-week run. ... In the tyranny of geography, an audience spread too thinly is the same as no audience at all. (Pg. 17)

The average Borders carries around 100,000 titles. Yet about a quarter of Amazon's book sales come from outside its top 100,000 titles. Consider the implication: If the Amazon statistics are any guide, the market for books that are not even sold in the average bookstore is already a third the size of the existing market — and what's more, it's growing quickly.

Kevin Laws: "The biggest money is in the smallest sales." (Pg. 23)

The vast majority of products are not available at a store near you. When you can dramatically lower the costs of connecting supply and demand, it changes not just the numbers, but the entire nature of the market. (Pg. 26)

In 1993, Americans spent an average of twenty-three hours and fifteen minutes per week tuned into the radio. As of spring 2004, that figure had dropped to nineteen hours and forty-five minutes. Listenership is now at a twenty-seven year low, and it is rock music programming that seems to be suffering the most. In 2005, an average of one U.S. rock radio station went out of business each week. (Pg. 35)

Everyone with those white earbuds is listening to what amounts to his or her own commercial-free radio station. (Pg 37)

Setting out to make a it is not exactly the same thing as setting out to make a good movie. There are things you do and don't do in the quest to draw tens of millions of paying viewer. You do pay as much as you can for the biggest-name star you can lure to the project. You don't try to be "too smart." You do have a happy ending. You don't kill off the star. If it's an action movie, more effects are better than fewer. And, all things being equal, it probably should be an action movie. (Pg. 39)

If it's not a hit, it is a miss. (Pg. 40)

We are turning from a mass market back into a niche nation, defined now not by our geography but by our interests. (Pg. 40)

From filmmakers to bloggers, producers of all sorts that start in the Tail with few expectations of commercial success can afford to take chances. They're willing to take more risks, because they have less to lose. there's no need for permission, a business plan, or even capital. The Tools of creativity are now cheap, and talent is more widely distributed than we know. Seen this way, the Long Tail promises to become the crucible of creativity, a place where ideas form and grow before evolving into commercial form. (Pg. 78)

There is increasingly frictionless mobility in the Long Tail. In a seamless digital marketplace, from iTunes to the Web itself, content that starts at the bottom can easily move to the top if it strikes a chord. Understanding the diverse incentives that can motivate the creators of such content becomes essential in finding and encouraging it. (Pg. 79)

We're entering an era of radical change for marketers. Faith in advertising and the institutions that pay of it is waning, while faith in individuals is on the rise. Peers trust peers. Top-down messaging is losing traction, while bottom-up buzz is gaining power. (Pg. 98)

For a generation of customers used to doing their buying research via search engine, a company's brand is not what the company says it is, but what Google says it is. The New tastemakers are us. (Pg. 99)

"In a world of infinite choice, context — not content — is king." — Rob Reid, Listen.com (Pg. 109)

Google is not quite time-agnostic, but it does measure relevance mostly in terms of incoming links, not newness. So when you search for a term, you're more likely to get the best page than the newest one. And because older pages have more time to attract incoming links, they sometimes have an advantage over the newer ones. The result is that the usual decay of popularity for blog posts and online news pages is now much more gradual than it was, thanks to the amount of traffic that comes via search. Google is in a sense serving as a time machine, and we're just now being able to measure the effect this has on publishing, advertising, and attention. (Pg. 143)

Some 138 million Americans shop at Wal-Mart each week, making it perhaps the single most unifying cultural force in the country. (Pg. 155)

Wal-Mart's shelves are a display case a mile wide and twenty-four inches deep. At first glance that may look like everything, but in a world that's actually a mile wide and a mile deep, a veneer of variety just isn't enough. (Pg 156)

Shelves are places where things go to die. (Pg. 159)

Mental traps we fall into because of scarcity thinking (Pg. 167):

- Everyone wants to be a star
- Everyone's in it for the money
- If it isn't a hit, it's a miss
- The only success is mass success
- "Direct to video" = bad
- "Self-published" = bad
- "Independent" = "they couldn't get a deal"
- Amateur = amateurish
- Low-selling = low-quality
- If it were good, it would be popular

Mass culture will not fall, it will simply get less mass. And niche culture will get less obscure. (Pg. 182)

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"In effect, the blogosphere is a collective enterprise — not 12 million separate enterprises, but one enterprise with 12 million reporters, feature writers and editorialists, yet with almost no costs. It's as if The Associated Press or Reuters had millions of reporters, many of them experts, all working with no salary for free newspapers that carried no advertising." — Richard Posner (judge and legal scholar) in the New York Times book review (Pg. 186)

Although the decline of mainstream cultural institutions may result in some people turning into echo chambers of like-minded views, I suspect that over time the power of human curiosity combined with near-infinite access to information will tend to make most people more open-minded, not less.

Mass culture may fade, but common culture will not. We will share our culture with others, but not with everyone. (Pg. 191)

Not having distribution is no longer an excuse for obscurity. (Pg. 193)

On any given day some of its 60 million active users are selling or buying more than 30 million items, making eBay one of the largest retailers in the world — brokering more than \$100 million in transactions each days. (Pg. 201)

eBay has managed to build its huge business with remarkably few people on salary. It has about \$5 million in revenue per employee, nearly thirty times that of Wal-Mart. It's also America's largest used-car dealer and largest seller of automotive parts. (Pg 202)

The traditional advertising market is a classic, hit-centric industry where high costs enforce a focus on the biggest sellers and buyers. The way it works is that an advertiser, say General Motors, has a marketing budget. GM commissions an advertising firm to create some ads and then a media buyer to place those ads in television, radio and print and online.

Meanwhile on the other side, those ad-driven media have their own ad sales forces. They pitch the advertisers and their media buyers on the virtues of their advertising vehicles. If all goes well, millions of dollars change hands. All of it is labor-intensive and made even more costly by the expensive schmoozing that's required in businesses where a lack of trusted performance metrics makes salesmanship and personal relationships key to winning businesses.

These days salespeople don't just twist arms, they also serve as advertising consultants, informing advertisers about the most effective ways to use a given medium or brainstorming creative new approaches to getting the advertisers' message out. That works well enough, but because it's expensive, it imposes a subtle cost: a focus on just the largest and most lucrative of potential advertisers. (Pg. 210)

Today, there are thousands of small Google advertisers who had never advertised anywhere before. Because of the self-service model, the measurable performance, the low cost of entry, and the ability to constantly tweak and improve the ads, advertisers are flocking to this new marketplace. (Pg. 212)

The secret to creating a thriving Long Tail business can be summarized in two imperatives (Pg. 217):

1. Make everything available.
2. Help me find it.