View this email in your browser

ETHEREALMIND
Human Infrastructure Magazine
A Newsletter on a Life in Networking

Issue Number 8
05/12/2015

Thought for the Week:

Bring a tambourine to the next vendor review meeting. Sing inspirational songs together before they hand you the quote/proposal.

Where Am I ?

I am in New York this week. The weather report from New York - its a "San Diego Swamp Ass" with hot & sweaty crotches guaranteed five minutes after

you step outside. Also, smelly on the street (Why does New York stink so bad ?). Both the garbage piled up on the side of the road and the people walking by.

I spent some time on Wall St talking with smart people about the future of networking with investors and fund managers.

I will be at the **ONUG** conference as part of **Tech Field Day**. I look forward to meeting lots of people from vendor & user community.

And we will be recording a SD-WAN live event with Viptela. If you haven't signed up already then follow the **link** - its on Tomorrow(Wednesday, 13 May) night.

Why I Haven't Written A Textbook

I am often asked why I haven't written any textbooks. The short answer is that it doesn't pay. The long answer follows.

The Book Deal

Let talk about money. All of the major publishers offer a consistent deal for authors of 10% of the wholesale price. A textbook that sells for USD$60 has a wholesale price of about USD$30 so the authors revenue is $3 per copy. The same applies to ebook formats, 10% of the revenue the publisher receives goes to the author.

To write a reasonable quality textbook takes a minimum of 1200 hours or roughly 30 man weeks of effort. The first draft takes about 600 hours then about 600 hours of editing and reviews.

Secondly, the big publishers require that manuscripts are in Microsoft Word format. I find writing in MS Word to be a major challenge for multiple reasons related to reliability (large documents crash a lot) and usability (MS Word is awful for writing). I prefer to write in rich text format (RTFD) for simplicity and to use writing tools that have enhanced features for **writing** without the useless parts used for desktop publishing or mail merging.

Content Poverty in a Hit-Based Market

I forsee a problem when the writing of books on a percentage basis is a selection criteria for what books are written. Consider that writing a book for the hundreds of thousands of people studying for entry level certifications would be highly profitable because 10% of a truck load of books works out just fine.

Now, **I could** write a book that focusses on design for Data Centre network in 2015 but this might sell just a few thousand copies. Lets say that there 5000 people who would buy a book on data centre network design on fundamental principles with vendor independent perspective. Thats a very optimistic total return of USD$15000. (And vendors provide similar information for free in the form of whitepapers, reference designs and so on)

I even have most of the content generated from presentations at conferences, client design project and blogging. It would take about a month of solid work to produce the first draft or about 200 hours. Still not worth it.

Whitepapers

Today, most of my writing efforts goes to writing whitepapers for vendors. While I couldn't make a living from them, I can supplement my income from the podcast and it has been working out OK.

I learn a LOT from writing whitepapers and it scratches my itch. Currently I am working on papers for three companies and its huge learning experience. Diving deep, thinking hard and writing is a good way to get stuff into your brain.

Self Publishing

A couple of years back, I wrote a couple of small ebooks to test the waters for self publishing at **Leanpub**. While I have sold quite a few, I have proved that self-publishing in Networking isn't going to make enough money for me. I thought that the exposure and publicity of my blog and the podcast would be enough.

Self-publishing of books doesn't work. So whats next ?

What next ?

The weekly podcast at Packet Pushers will publish a special show this week where Ethan & I talk about the future of Packet Pushers. We have some new ideas for providing content that is useful, educational and technical. Show 237 will publish later this week.
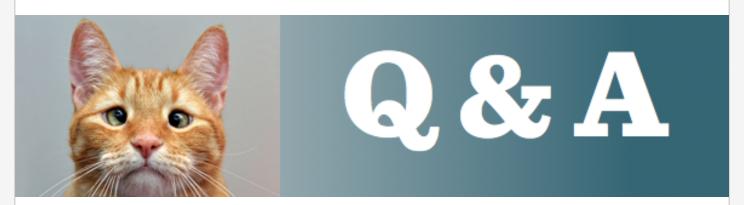

A Night of Software Defined WAN

Are you attending the Open Networking User Group conference in New York on May 13 ?

Ethan & I will be moderating a discussion about SD-WAN in an ONUG after hours

session on May 13, 2015. The format is food and a live podcast with network architects from big companies such as VISA, Gap and Bloomberg with topics on real world SD-WAN and discussing the issues around deployment, design and outcomes for their companies.

Head over to **Viptela** to register (we need numbers for catering and seating) and thanks to Viptela for sponsoring the event and the recording.

Answers to Questions ?

People ask me questions. I try to provide answers based on who and what I am. **Email me** and I will post the answer here

Question:

One of the things I dislike about recent networking advances is SDN -- it takes the network engineer out of the picture and ultimately leads to bad decisions on the part of developers.
For instance: massive, campus spanning L2 segments; tunnels everywhere; Reinventing BGP / FlowSpec; crazy low timers on IGP instead of using BFD... Curious what your opinion is. It seems more and more NetEng is in the core and moving away from access etc.

Answer:

What I like about SDN is that I will be doing activities that are valuable to the business. Configuring a VLAN is roughly equivalent to toilet cleaning, useless

to revenue generation but messy, necessary and stinky. When I am valuable to the business, then I can get paid more, more recognition and do more stuff. Today, networking is in as a problem because its hard, costly and unreliable so IT managers don't want to waste time and money working on it.

SDN should solve the massive problems in networking.
I would rather spent time analysing application performance, performing big data analysis on packet capture, negotiating with vendors on new WAN designs. What about researching and learning new SDN stuff because you don't have submit change requests every day because change is automated and risk free.

Thats what SDN will eventually bring to the enterprise. We know it can be done because Facebook, Google, Amazon etc are doing this today! Its just a matter of time until its gets scaled down for the Enterprise.

Internets of Interest
Webpages that have caught my attention in the last couple of weeks.

SSH & Meterpreter Pivoting Techniques
Pivoting is a technique used to route traffic through a compromised host on a penetration test.

Link

Operating Cisco Application Centric Infrastructure

The Cisco ACI team did a book sprint project and came up with this very good book on the nitty gritty details of operating an ACI platform. I've been steadily reading it through and found it useful in many respects.

Operating Cisco Application Centric Infrastructure

I couldn't find an ebook version. I prefer epub format to PDFs where I can. Did I miss something ?

7 Security Measures to Protect your Servers
Worth a quick read. By the team at Digital Ocean, who should know a thing or two about it.

Haven't been able to blog much lately. Here are the last seven articles from my blog.

EtherealMind.com Latest

Logical Razors Can Take on Corporate Babble - **Link**
Canned Response to BGP Networking Questions – Reddit - **Link**
IETF RFC 8374 BGPsec Design Choices and Summary of Supporting Discussions - **Link**
Net Neutrality Hasn't Ended, We Don't Know When - **Link**
Next Market Transition ? Cheaper Buying, Less Selling - **Link**
Video – Enterprise IT is Luxury Market, Stop Whining About The Price - **Link**
BPF, eBPF, XDP and Bpfilter… What are these things and what do they mean for the enterprise? – Netronome - **Link**

I welcome your feedback, questions and corrections. Send an email to **humaninfrastructure@packetpushers.net** and I will write a response.

About Piece of A Human Infrastructure

A strongly curated newsletter produced by Greg Ferro that contain observations and thoughts on IT Infrastructure with a networking focus that he has seen, done, discussed, reviewed or just simply found on the Internet.

The format is structured but flexible (like any magazine) and will change over time as I settle into a routine of capturing ideas, topics that seem relevant and ultimately finding patterns that seem to be interesting to you. Your feedback will drives changes so don't hesitate to email with feedback or ask followup questions for the next edition.

About Greg Ferro

Greg is a co-host of the Packet Pushers Podcast a weekly podcast on Data Networking which has over 8000 subscribers. He blogs regularly at EtherealMind.com for the last eight years and is pretty well known these days. He also write as an analyst for Network Computing and Gigaom Research. He speaks at major events on Data Centre Design, SDN and life in technology. He moderates panels, advises customers and technology companies.

He works as a part-time network engineer in the UK on a freelance basis. Because real work configuring routers and switches remain not only a passion but important to keeping touch with the industry.