IN THIS WEEK'S ISSUE: Getting Out Of Your Own Echo Chamber. Hello? Hello? Turn on those images, we aim for amusing (though sometimes we miss).

PACKETPUSHERS
Human Infrastructure Magazine
A Newsletter About a Life in Networking

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(aka The Project Plan)

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The "Stop talking to yourself" issue.

Thought For The Week:
"Need make some room for those Super Bowl calories."

1. Eliminating The Echo Chamber Effect

by Ethan Banks

The Internet and social media allow each of us to curate our own micro-view of the world. There's only so much time and far too many voices to keep up with. Therefore, we tend to follow the people, companies, and media that talk about the technology we use.

That self-imposed filter, perhaps inadvertently, affects the way we think about technology. Marketing professionals often apply this strategy on purpose. It's called "controlling the message." Message control is usually a bad thing, because it means the listener only hears what the speaker wants.

Whoa. We don't like it when marketers control the message: we want the whole picture. And yet, we have a tendency to let our biases and preconceptions control what we listen to. We make our own echo chambers of technology:

"Tell me what I already know in terms of technology I already understand from vendors I already use so that I feel comfortable in my employment status and validated in my design choices."

I am naturally biased towards technology I understand, and that I know works. But that familiarity means I use the same solutions over and over. Sometimes that's okay; when something works, using it again feels safe and maybe even right.

But what if there's a better way?

To find those better ways, we need to get out of our technology echo chambers. We need to stop being a victim of message control, self-imposed or otherwise.

How? By consuming information we would ordinarily ignore. In this way, technologies, companies, and designs that might have been filtered out have a chance to penetrate our minds.

- **Read blogs by practitioners who work with technology that you don't.** I read a lot of networking blogs, but I also read blogs by developers, virtualization pros, security gurus, and the clouderati. I don't understand every detail, but I learn about technology problems and solutions that I'd never considered before.

- **Study solutions by vendors whose products you don't use.** If you're an Arista person, read some Juniper whitepapers once in awhile. If you're cuddled deeply in Uncle Chuck's comforting arms, check out something from Cumulus now and then. Think broadly across the vendor spectrum. Solutions vary widely.

- **Redesign your current architecture using nothing but open source.** You can do this as a mental exercise, or in a lab, but the idea is to force yourself to completely re-think your IT stack. What would the key software components be? How would you build your switching platform? What would the support process look like? And so on.

- **Strike up a friendship on the Internet and exchange ideas.** Share messages on Twitter. Comment on blogs. Find people on Slack, such as the Packet Pushers community Slack channel.

However you do it, open the door to your echo chamber and step outside. Learn different ways of solving problems. Become a better technologist by understanding as many options as possible. That will make you forever valuable, marketable, and employable.

Sponsor: WhiteSpider
Cisco ACI: Debunking The Complexity Myth

Cisco's Application Centric Infrastructure (ACI) promises to bring intent-based networking to the data center. To find out how, listen to a

[new Priority Queue podcast](#) with the Packet Pushers and sponsors Cisco and WhiteSpider.

The podcast takes a detailed look at real-world customer experiences of deploying ACI. It explodes the myth that ACI is complex, and demonstrates how it's transforming IT operations in these organizations. The podcast also explores how Cisco's SD-Access takes ACI constructs and applies them to the campus network.

[Listen now](#). And to learn more about the case studies discussed, please visit www.whitespider.eu/packetpushers.

Thanks, Internet

All kinds of amusing things wash up in our social feeds.

Evolution or devolution?

Greg Baroth ✓
@gbaroth

1998: In 20 years we'll have flying cars

2018: we literally have to tell people not to eat Tide Pods

Packet Pushers Virtual Design Clinic
Coming March 2018!

The Packet Pushers will host a Virtual Design Clinic on Tuesday, March 20, 2018. This live, online event will offer engineering deep dives on network challenges and solutions.

It will feature presentations from the Packet Pushers, independent speakers, and sponsors. After the event, we'll make the presentations available free for Packet Pushers members.

Stay tuned for more details on speakers and how to register.

Internets Of Interest

A collection of pre-loved links that might interest you. "Pre-loved" because I liked them enough to put into this newsletter. It's not *true* love.

By Drew Conry-Murray

Amazon Health

Amazon raised a lot of eyebrows this week with an announcement that it was partnering with JPMorgan Chase and Berkshire Hathaway to create an independent company to address their employees' healthcare needs.

The announcement had few concrete details, leaving observers to wonder what these mammoths were up to. Ben Thompson, who writes the Stratechery blog, lays out a plausible scenario for how Amazon can leverage its expertise as an aggregator (that is, a middle man) to disrupt the healthcare and health insurance industries.

It's not by setting up yet another health insurance company.

"...*Amazon doesn't create an insurance company to compete with other insurance companies (or the other pieces of healthcare infrastructure); rather, Amazon makes it possible — and desirable — for individual health care providers to come onto their platform directly, be that doctors, hospitals, pharmacies, etc*."

The more users Aamzon can attract to its platform, the more insurers, providers, drug companies, etc. will be drawn in. This attracts more users, which attracts more providers, creating a positive feedback loop that grows the platform. And as the aggregator, Amazon skims a percentage off the top.

This might reduce healthcare costs, which is positive. But Amazon also ingratiates itself further into the lives of American consumers, gets access to more of their data, and so on.

Thompson brings more nuance to the scenario, so if you're curious about how Amazon's ambitions might play out, this piece is worth your time.

LINK

Intent-based networking portends the future of infrastructure management

Intent-based networking is the new hotness in the networking industry. A handful of startups brought the notion to the market, and now incumbents such as Cisco are running with it.

If you're looking for a clear-eyed overview of just what intent-based networking encompasses, Kurt Marko, writing at Diginomica, [has an excellent overview](#).

His piece outlines the key concepts of intent without falling under the spell of unicorns and rainbows. It also touches on what some of the startups are doing.

If you feel a bit fogged by vendor marketing around intent, this piece should help clear your head.

[LINK](#)

Product News

Find out about interesting new products, or get essential information about things you might already be using.

Noction Announces Intelligent Routing Platform for Public Clouds

Traffic flowing across the Internet knows what path to follow because of the BGP routing protocol. BGP routers exchange routing information with each other, populating their forwarding tables with directions to remote destinations. BGP is extraordinarily good at what it does. BGP was designed to keep the Internet connected globally no matter what topological changes might happen in a network over time.

LINK

Briefings In Brief: A New Packet Pushers Podcast

Want more tech news? Subscribe to our newest podcast channel, Briefings In Brief. We take five minutes or less to summarize and analyze tech news, product announcements, or other interesting items that come across our desks.

LINK

Recent Podcasts

The last five podcasts published on Packet Pushers

PacketPushers.net - The Last Five

[Datanauts 119: Is The Full Stack Engineer A Myth?](#)

[Network Break 169: Cisco Buys Skyport; Dell Flirts With An IPO](#)

[PQ 137: WhiteSpider & Real-World Cisco ACI Deployments (Sponsored)](#)

[Show 374: Network Modeling & Verification With Forward Networks (Sponsored)](#)

[PQ 136: Making The Transition From Skype To Microsoft Teams (Sponsored)](#)

Full Stack Journey tells personal stories about the ongoing quest to become a full stack engineer. [Subscribe today!](#)

Priority Queue tackles niche and nerdy tech topics and cutting-edge research projects. [Subscribe here!](#)

Quick Survey: Going MultiCloud?

As more workloads and applications are deployed in the public cloud (particularly IaaS), some organizations are considering how to break the silos between providers such as AWS, Azure, and Google. The ability to move workloads from one IaaS provider to another could help manage costs, enhance availability, or avoid lock-in.

Where are you with multicloud?

[A. We have the same application running in different IaaS providers](#)
[B. We're actively examining multicloud strategies](#)
[C. It's on our minds](#)
[D. It's not an issue for us](#)
[E. Other](#)

Last Issue's Survey Results
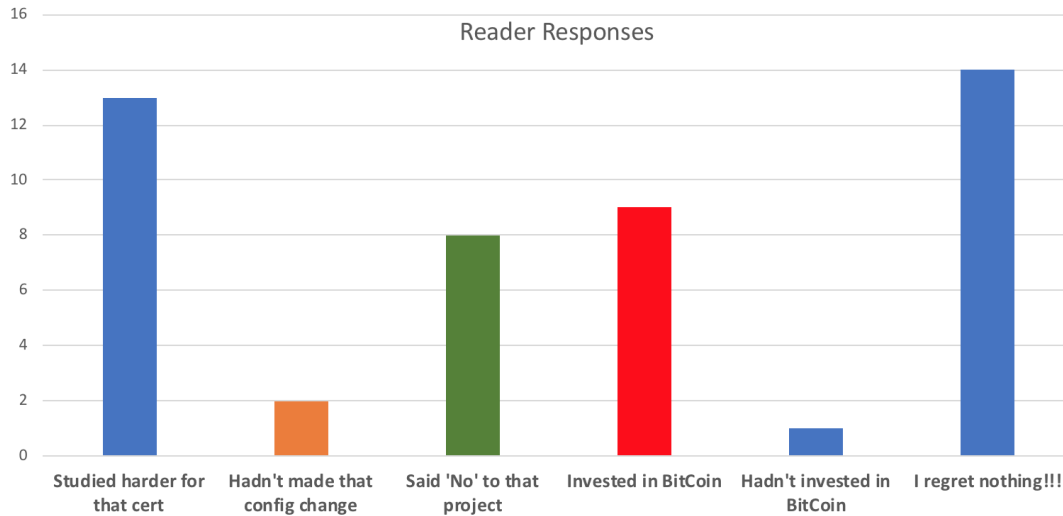
Source: Packet Pushers Human Infrastructure Survey January 2018. 47 respondents

Did We Miss Something?

Got an link or an article to share? Email it to
humaninfrastructure@packetpushers.net

The End Bit

Sponsorship and Advertising - Send an email to humaninfrastructure@packetpushers.net *for more information. You could reach 5,013 people.*

Human Infrastructure is bi-weekly newsletter with view, perspectives, and opinions. It is edited and published by Greg Ferro and Drew Conry-Murray from PacketPushers.net. If you'd like to contribute, email Drew at drew.conrymurray@packetpushers.net.

We don't give away your email address or personal details because that would suck.

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