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Eastercon LX2009

My Convention



Damn!

It's extremely irritating. My partner Carrie had her laptop stolen from the newsletter room yesterday. The frustrating thing is she was in the room when it vanished. She moved down to the other end of the room for, at maximum, 10 minutes and when she returned the computer was gone. We were in the process of sorting out some online storage but had not yet figured out which we were going to use. The next issue of Mostly Harmless (the ZZ9 magazine) our wedding guest list and planning stuff and so many other things were on that computer and we'll have to restart. Yes we should have made recent backups but we shouldn't have to expect people waltzing in the newsroom and making off with your stuff **while you're there**. Grrr! V. V. Cross.

Of course, not everything is doom and gloom. More people arrived on Saturday or rather I discovered more of the people that I particularly enjoy meeting. It's always a pleasure to see Lilian Edwards, Christina Lake, Doug Bell and Lennart Uhlin. OK, OK it's a bit sappy but I really feel uplifted when I meet them. Lilian, in particular is a regular bundle of energy and enthusiasm even when she's under attack by evil lurgi as she is now.

It's All About Twitter

Twitter Panel

Ouch!

I should have been on the twitter panel this morning but I got held up in the car (delayed not hijacked) by a parade on the way into the convention. The panel started at 11:00 and I arrived at 11:05 - Bigger!

I didn't want to disrupt the proceedings so rather than taking my place on the panel I slipped into a seat near the back. There were some fun bits and I was intrigued by the concept of attempting to reference a tweet in an academic work. There was some dull stuff (in my humble opinion). Our little group <name and shame space - me, Lilian, Christina, Carrie and Doug> at the back did talk a little too much during parts of the programme item. Many apologies to the others in the room for that. I hope we didn't spoil your enjoyment of the proceedings.

Now, I made a few notes for this panel and despite spending a large proportion of the item with my hand waving about in the air I never got to say any of them out loud so I'll take the opportunity here of doing a short summary. The panel was called something like 'What is Twitter For?'

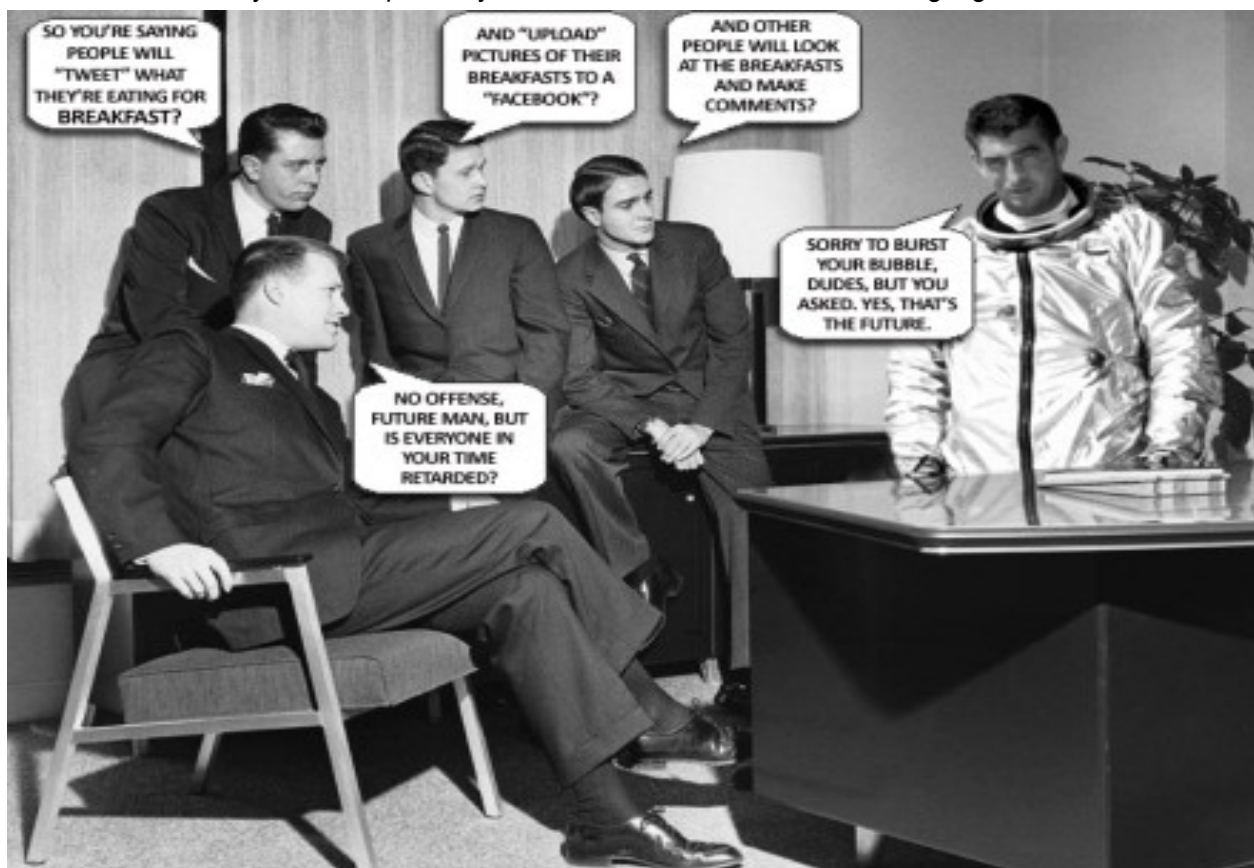
Marketing was mentioned in the panel, talking and a brief mention was made of the twitters that have been made from disaster zones such as the plane crash in the Hudson. I would have imagined that help would have arrived for that plane though, whether twitterers were on the case or not. It was useful for getting information out about the terror in Mumbai and there have been cases where people have managed to get someone that can help down to a police station when they've been arrested in some of those places where people can and do disappear when they enter police stations.

So it's undoubtedly useful in those situations but they are unusual. Twitter can also be of use for more mundane purposes, such as carrying on a conversation with your partner when they've gone for a big pooh. Sometimes that pooh aroma may mean you don't want to stand outside the door shouting. Then again tho' email could be just as good.

I was trying to figure out why celebrity type peoples were using Twitter and, of course, Stephen Fry came up with the answer in a lecture he gave at an Apple Store. Previously most celebrities were connected with their fans through agents, publicity people and waving at them in crowds. Now they are able to talk directly to (and sometimes with) them and have an immediate channel in which they can reply to any adverse criticism in the

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media. It must feel extremely empowering when faced with an article which says terrible things about you to immediately tweet out to several thousand of your fans the truth of the situation or at least your version of the truth. These, obviously aren't Stephen Fry's exact words. He uses far better language than wot I do.



This picture above, I discovered on Twitter – extremely funny but I don't know who's responsible for it. So remember – we're all waiting to see pictures of your breakfasts and wish to talk about them at length. It's what we live and breathe for.

I was thinking back to when I've found Twitter most useful and I think it was at an event called a 'Podcamp' some time ago. Podcamp is a wiki type convention where we podcaster folks congregate to talk about podcasting, new media and all that sort of thing.

We tagged any comments with the name of the convention and were able to watch all activity from the attendees. This is absolutely brilliant to help create that community feel. You can keep in touch with everything that's happening and also who is there. Even during talks you can be sharing insights, amusing comments and if the speaker is watching the feed himself he can be responding to the audience without being interrupted. It's an absolutely brilliant technology for conventions.

Penultimately here's a tweet spotted:

I think hobo vagina is illegal in Ohio. Fish Tacos are not.

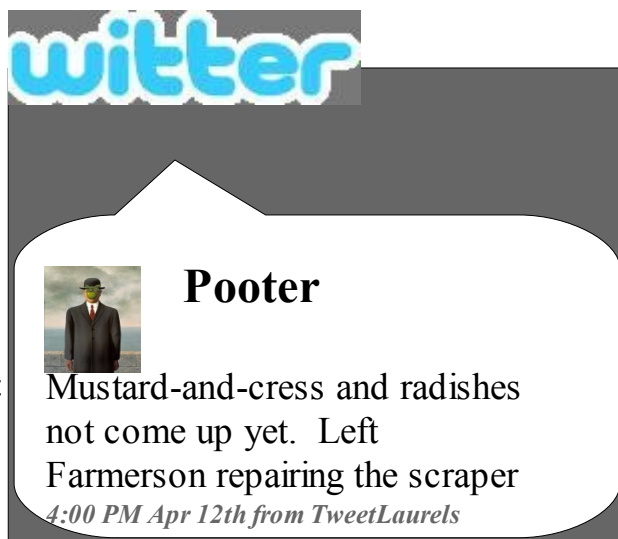
And **ultimately**:

Some advice for writers from Eoin Colfer

You gotta be strict with yourself so you gotta look at your book in the morning, look at what you've written and if it's shit then get rid of it. If you leave it in cos you think that's what people might want then shame on you.

Bye for now – apologies for the Twitter heavy

issue. In the next one I plan to do a con review (of sorts) trying to get to grips with my con experience for Eastercon 2009.



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