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Interview with Drew Curtis from Fark



Adrian Bye: I'm here today with Drew Curtis who is the single owner of Fark.com. One of Drew's most interesting things is the volume of traffic he gets. Maybe, Drew, do you want to tell us a little bit about the site and who you are for those who haven't heard from you before.

Drew Curtis: Yes. Well, essentially, they finally came up with a name for it. They're calling it a news aggregator now. I guess that's about as close as we have been before. It kind of horn us in this social networking circle as well but I keep telling people that we're Web 3.0, which is good editing. Take your user submission, but then have somebody actually go through and bend them because not everything everybody sends in is worth actually reading.

Adrian Bye: Yes, you've been called a blog for a long time.

Drew Curtis: Yes, but we really weren't. I was more than happy to let people continue to call us that. But no, we're not really a blog.

Adrian Bye: A news aggregator sounds like a more realistic term.

Drew Curtis: Yes.

Adrian Bye: Interesting about what you're doing is that you run it pretty much by yourself. You want to talk about your traffic volume?

Drew Curtis: Yes. We're up to 52 or 53 million page views in the last 30 days, which is 25% higher than last year. Uniques in the audience are about three and three quarters of a million.

Adrian Bye: So, this is traffic then that you drive from your house in...you live in Kentucky, don't you?

Drew Curtis: Yes, that's right.

Adrian Bye: You just drive it out of your house and it's mainly driven by public relations, is that right?

Drew Curtis: Yes, pretty much. Another issue is that traffic wise that most people don't consider because it really isn't an issue for most places, is that we're also sending out about 50 million page views a month that we don't get. Those aren't accredited to us but they land on other sites, mostly mainstream media sites.



Adrian Bye: Right, okay. So, you get your 53 million page views a month, so that's three and a half million uniques, right?

Drew Curtis: Yes.

Adrian Bye: Actually, mate, why don't you talk a little bit about how you got it started, tell us about how your traffic volume has grown and how you keep it going, because the whole radio thing is a little unusual model, as I'm sure you know.

Drew Curtis: Yes, definitely. It started out I was spending most of my mornings goofing around, reading funny news stories and finding the occasional one and e-mailing it to friends of mine. After awhile, I started to suspect they might be getting annoyed by all these e-mails I'm sending out. So, I decided, "Okay, the heck with this. Then I'll just go ahead and just put this up on a website." I told them, "If you guys are still interested, you are more than welcome to continue reading on the website." That's literally how it started.

The way that it grew though over time was through a combination of publicity and just not sucking. I tell people you can't really lose your audience without actually pissing them off. The way we gained it over time was doing the occasional radio interviews at the start, did a spot weekly on TechTV, for about a year and a half. None of those things actually generated a lot of traffic by themselves, but it was the continuing...the repetition over time that made all the press.

Adrian Bye: So, you're on TechTV. So, you were a regular person, you got interviewed or you did interview and then so that you have your branding in front of people over a period of time.

Drew Curtis: Yes, they would have me on every Friday and I would go down the three weirdest usually tech-oriented stories of the week. But I think we started drifting after awhile because usually the weirdest stories of the week weren't usually tech-related. There was one of those things, too, where...I mean, I don't know what TechTV's rating were. I did talk to a lot of people that talked to me on there. In fact, I was down in Memphis this weekend and talked to somebody who had seen me on there back in the day.

So, like I said, I don't remember even seeing any traffic spike from those guys online after doing it. But what I did notice was that in a week when I did TechTV and this was back when the traffic was much lower. In a week when I did the show, our traffic would rise slightly. Not a lot, but just a little bit. In a week when I didn't do the show, it would remain flat. So, it was obvious over time that we're definitely gaining the viewers from it, it just wasn't clear to how many. But I think that again, it was the consistency, it was the doing it non-stop. But people don't generally check out website the first time they hear about it, which is you'll see these occasional billboards or spot ads or whatever. People will go check them out about the 20th or 30th time they see it.

Adrian Bye: So, what you're talking about here is almost like a success of branding, like you've actually branded your way into building all these traffic.

Drew Curtis: Yes. As a matter of fact, our traffic stat show that as well. Very little of our traffic is actually coming from search. We're actually I think it's something like less than 1.5% of our traffic is coming from Google and about 65% of it, people are just typing the name or have it bookmarked and they're coming straight there.

Adrian Bye: So, does this mean your site ongoing is dependent on you doing interviews? I mean if you stop, will your traffic just slowly decline?

Drew Curtis: I don't know, I doubt it. I think it just won't go up anymore, it will stop basically. It will stop dead and that will be the end of it. But not necessarily, I guess there's always word-of-mouth, too. But we noticed, I mean, in order to lose readers, you have to actively irritate them. So, unless you do that, as long as you keep the quality up, you're not likely to lose them. You'll probably still gain through word-of-mouth, it just happens to work out.

Adrian Bye: So, you mentioned like you get an increase in traffic when you were running. Do you have to quantify that at all or you just see a bump? Are you talking like a 5% bump or 10%, is it a 100,000 visitors?

Drew Curtis: Well, back when we were doing TechTV initially, we didn't have that much traffic. But right now, I mean we've had situations where I got mentioned in Time magazine. I've been in there like two or three times. I can't tell any appreciable difference in the traffic. I'm sure it's probably generating something like 10,000 page views. But our daily number rotates from somewhere between 1.8 to 1.9 million, up to as high as maybe 2 to 2.1. So, if you get an extra 10,000 from something, it's probably lost in the wash.

But that's just us today. For example, I was sitting around doing a radio interview out there in Indiana where the guy never heard of Fark before but he was talking about how big the show I was on. It's *Bob and Tom*, which was like 125, 150 affiliate markets. He said, "If you go check your web stats later on today, you're going to see 2,000 or 3,000 hits." I didn't tell him that I was going to be able to see that because of the fact that we already have. But same time, that's still a significant amount of traffic for somebody who doesn't have any.

Adrian Bye: So, at what point did you realize that this was actually working to drive traffic to your website because that obviously wasn't the strategy in the beginning, or was it?

Drew Curtis: No, it wasn't actually. The real thing was, it was to try to just get practice because I was hoping at some point to be the regular person that could do stuff like that, go on shows or what-not and do that. So, that was the original purpose of it. What ended up happening was I accidentally ended up doing a classic branding approach without knowing what I was doing.

Adrian Bye: So, how long after you'd started doing that did you realize, "Well hey, this is actually working and I need to keep doing it."

Drew Curtis: It was actually quite awhile when I passed it, actually. I think I've done TechTV for a year before we've noticed. But it seems to be the case, it's like connection of wisdom, for example. Whether you can get a five minute spot on CNN in any given it time, for example, that it's going to work out a lot better for you than any kind of advertising that you can possibly do because people generally ignore advertising but they don't ignore news.

Adrian Bye: Right. I guess, in your case, you hadn't promoted the site anywhere else, had you? So, it was kind of a no-brainer as to where all the traffic was coming from.

Drew Curtis: Yes, because at that point, they were the only guys that were having me on. It was one of those deals where, even back then, most North American radio stations were using Fark as a morning show resource. But absolutely nobody was giving us credit. Now, we get some, I don't know, decent amount of credit, but it still could be better.

Adrian Bye: Okay. It's interesting. Have you heard of anyone else who's doing this in the way that you are?

Drew Curtis: No. I think other than like it's your classic publicist approach, if you have like a C-list celebrity client, you'd probably be trying to do this stuff. But they have different methods and what-not, they understand it. Like I said, it was one of the things where I just kind of accidentally backed into it. I wasn't really attempting to do this, but it ended up working out. Then when I turned around looked back and saw the path, it was like, "Okay. Well, this is obvious."

Adrian Bye: Yes, right. So, for someone that's got a site that they're making sales or doing Internet type stuff, how would you recommend they do what you're doing? Is it something that adds value, I mean even if they can't initially see results?

Drew Curtis: Yes, it is over time. It's like one of those things where because one appearance isn't going to do it, you need to have 20 or 30. So, for example, you see on local TV, you hire people that join a...doctors will do a doctor's segment where they have some specialist come in from a local municipality to talk about whatever anybody's questions happen to be. In reality, this is really just an ad for that person's practice.

Take it a step further; there are certain tricks of the trade you can do in order to get newspapers, magazine and TV to pick up stories about products. But the trick is, is that they won't take a straight ad and they sure as hell won't take it if it's not exceptionally different from anything anybody else is doing. So, in order to get any kind of publicity, you have to throw them a curve ball.

Adrian Bye: Right, fair enough. I'm looking at your Alexa rank. I noticed your Alexa rank today is like 2,157.



Drew Curtis: Yes, it's been going down pretty steadily for the last year and a half, which is bizarre considering our traffic keeps going up.

Adrian Bye: Yes. That's what I want to ask you about because when I first talked to you about a year and a half ago, I saw your Alexa rank was like 800 or something. So, it's been going down.

Drew Curtis: Yes.

Adrian Bye: Back then, you were getting about a million page views a day. You said, I think, down to a million to two million. Now, you're really touching on the 2 million a day.

Drew Curtis: Yes, it's gone up. But I don't really understand how Alexa works exactly. Like to give you an example, Michael Arrington over at Techcrunch was saying that his site gets 6 million page views a month and their Alexa ranking, it's something like 300 or

something. I have absolutely no explanation for it. It baffles me. I mean Alexa is not a scientific tool, even I doubt it. It is kind of odd that they're that different though, it doesn't make any sense.

Adrian Bye: In that case, that makes sense to me because his readership of people are more likely to have the tool bar still.

Drew Curtis: Well, probably. So, our readership is a lot more mainstream. I mean they're still fairly intelligent, but they're a lot more mainstream and not as tech centric.

Adrian Bye: Yes, which makes sense. But what's surprising is that yours has dropped so much, I thought they were kind of working that stuff out. I mean, you've got stats, I remember you even showed me your stats. About that time, you were definitely one to two million a day.

Drew Curtis: Yes. Well, what's weird about it is I don't really know how they're tracking it necessarily. But like one of the reasons we've seen explosive growth in the social networking sector, and this is a mistake that a lot of people make when they read about it, it isn't because that it's a good idea necessarily. It's because it generates a phenomenal amount of page views. When you take away everything else, at the end of the day, that's what's really driving the interest in this and because they're selling ads based on the thousand-page view model. That is of extreme interest.

It's one of those deals where, for example, people will make the mistake they're thinking that just because somebody is extremely wealthy they must be intelligent. It's not necessarily the case. So, you'll see things, for example, like on Facebook which they just changed this recently. Where, for example, if somebody wants to friend you and you click on it to say, "Okay, I authorize them," it takes you to another page, which says where did you meet this person. Well, you don't need to have another page in there. But by adding that extra page, that's another page view and I can only assume that that kicks the Alexa rank up.

So, for example, like on the social networking site, say like Digg where you vote on articles, our average person shows up on Fark and reads about two pages. The average person shows up on say, Facebook, it will go through about a hundred of them. It's still the same user, it's still the same stuff. But we've also been noticing that the quality of the page views on social networking sites is pretty bad.

I was talking to Starcom out in LA when we were talking about them doing advertising for Disney and a few other folks. They were saying that the value of the page views on Facebook and MySpace was pretty bad because people tend to just rip through there while they're doing stuff, they're adding friends, they're just cruising around. It's interesting that even ComScore has recently made a significant change in the way they rank sites. Now they're looking at doing it based on time per page, not number of page views. The minute that that change went through, all of a sudden Facebook went from having a separate page for would you know this person to all of a sudden it's a drop down box now.

Adrian Bye: They changed it that quickly.

Drew Curtis: Yes. It's interesting, too, because you'll see this little...like the way that these sites are designed, like for example, anytime you see like a top 10, top 50 list or whatever, on a news site, you'll see, especially when it involves pictures of hot chicks. They will put one per page, no thumbnail advanced. So, basically, if you wanted to go see who got number one, you have to go all the way through all 50 in order to generate all that traffic. We don't do any of that stuff. So, it's probably driving us downward.

Adrian Bye: Like this is a related point. I hardly read magazines anymore and I was just looking at one magazine...I forget what it was...I was in the airport just looking through some magazines. I'm

noticing to get to the table of contents, and I just hadn't seen this for ages, I had to flick through like 6 pages of ads and it wasn't even clear where it was. It was kind of like it was buried. I was like advertising where there's pop overs, all these other stuff to try and increase ad impressions.

Drew Curtis: Yes, that's actually a value ad when you go and sell through branded advertisers, that's what you say. You say we're at that spot right in front of the table of contents is worth more money because you're going to be poking around trying to find the damn thing and you're going to be going pass their ads in the process. They actually charge more money for that positioning and that's why there's so many ads right there.

Adrian Bye: Yes, right. So, it's the same business model, just a different media, and this is how they've adapted it to the Internet.

Drew Curtis: Yes, exactly. These things have been around for while. It's no big deal whatsoever. My only problem is that I keep having people ask me why is our traffic going down based on Alexa's numbers and it's just kind of annoying to me because our traffic's actually up 25%.

Adrian Bye: Yes. So, have you looked down something that's more accurate than Alexa, like Compete? I mean have you found something better?

Drew Curtis: For us, no. We're kind behind the eight ball on this because our traffic comes from two main sources, it's people who are reading at work and people who are reading at colleges. The problem is that a lot of this stuff that is more accurate requires the individual to install this stuff on their browser. That's why besides to track the installed stuff like the way Alexa works, it probably ranks Fark a lot lower than they should because they don't see people coming in from work. Most people work in work environments where their computers are locked down and they don't have the option to install this stuff, which is good. But, you loose all of those people in terms of metrics.

The other thing which is really interesting is that Quantcast is one that we've been using. You can install code on your page. Just the same way where you can do with Google Analytics, but Quantcast allows you to actually link to it and show people what the traffic is. It's interesting the difference between Quantcast and Google Analytics because Quantcast and Google are both saying that we're getting the same number of page views. But Quantcast is undercounting the uniques by 1.5 million or Google is over counting it. They're basically looking at the same information and making different determinations about what's going on.

Adrian Bye: What are you talking about, Google Analytics and what was the other one?

Drew Curtis: Quantcast. It's basically like Alexa. So, what they do is if you are using their code they just guess at what your site traffic is. We hooked up to it because it was so far off, it was ridiculous. So, we went ahead and plugged their code in our page, but they got the page views identical to Google, but the uniques are about a million and a half different for whatever reason.

But then the thing about Quantcast is that I have been looking at it and I've been told that that looks fairly easy. A lot of server farms come from Asia and what-not in order to drive people's Alexa

ranking up. You can kind of tell this is going on if you look at percentage, especially for US sites, percentage of traffic from the United States.

For example, I think Digg did something like in the order of 23% or something like that. For example, 23% out of the US, it's interesting to point out that as far as advertisers are concerned. Those are the only page views that are worth anything, they don't give a rat's ass about the other 77% that are coming to a site. They won't even know. In fact, every advertising contract you get will require you to geo-target down to the United States only because they don't want to go outside of it.

Adrian Bye: This is fascinating. Except Quantcast then, you put their tracking code on your site. I'm looking at Quantcast.com/fark.com and see everything going in. Like I mean, you opened up your Google Analytics a long time ago.

Drew Curtis: Yes.

Adrian Bye: They've actually opened these stats up to all users so that users can see from a third party independent metric on how the stats actually break down.

Drew Curtis: Yes, exactly. So, it works exactly the same way. Like I said, it's interesting that the page views are reported identically but the uniques are counted separately. I mean obviously it just means that they're looking at the same information but they've made different determinations about what constitute a unique hit.

Adrian Bye: So, do you see their stats accurate or are there any inaccuracies in it?

Drew Curtis: The page views are. But what I'm also seeing is in seeing the same thing happening with Quantcast, it's happening with Alexa which is as more people discover it, the rank that we have...and we started out around 500 on that thing...we're being driven down now again. Like I think we're closing in on a thousand and dropping.

There are a few sites out there that I know are completely faking all of their traffic that are getting ranked up in the upper two digits. So, it's not foolproof by any stretch, but it's just one of those things that you can look at to get kind of a better idea of what's going on. In general, these things only provide a relative guess at how you're doing. They're not very accurate at all.



Adrian Bye: Yes. Saying that you're 2,157, what do you think are your real Alexa would be?

Drew Curtis: I have no idea, that's a good question. The problem is that I don't know how they're ranking it. I mean if it's just straight up page views, that's one thing. But there's an argument that could be made that straight up page views isn't worth anything. When your site is being valued, they actually look at the uniques. In particular, when mainstream advertisers are looking at you, they aren't looking at buying page views as much; they want to know how big is your audience. They don't really care about the number of page views you've got.

Adrian Bye: Alright, interesting stuff. Alright, let's move on. Monetization is an interesting part of your site and you've started handling this differently. You had a deal with Federated Media, you had people helping you with your remnant inventory. Do you want to talk a little bit about how you do it and sort of where you're going with that?

Drew Curtis: Yes. Federated Media is basically a group of folks, you outsource your sales group basically to them. They do a pretty good job actually. We've kind of moved away from them in recent years due to something they call channel conflict. We were approached by Maxim Magazine which used to be Dennis Digital News Group and now I think they're calling themselves Alpha Media. It's basically Maxim wondering stuff.

We were approached by them and they basically said, "Look, how about we do this the same thing for you. But we'll only do you, we're not going to start a network, we're not going to go and get anybody else. It will be you, the three of us and then that's it." So, that was a much more attractive deal mainly because the drawback with Federated Media was is that they have a number of other clients. I think they have something like 150 member sites that they're paying attention to and sales people aren't the most attentive people in the world so getting attention over there is difficult. Whereas if you're the sole client, essentially what we are with Maxim, it's a much better deal. Basically, what they do is they go out and they try to get the branded advertising which is only pay for a thousand impressions. No Pay-Per-Click, no Pay-Per-Performance, just straight up page views.

Adrian Bye: So, what kind of clients did Federated Media bring in and then now Maxim?

Drew Curtis: Federated Media did pretty good. I'm trying to think, they had a few A-listers. I mean it's good stuff, Fortune 500 companies for the most part. Maxim does a bit of a better job on it, mostly because Federated Media is located out in Silicon Valley; most of their authors are tech oriented. Since they're in Silicon Valley already, obviously they've got a better reach into tech companies. So, they end up spending a lot more time working on those. Maxim is targeting more of the male type audience - your automotive, your beer. Anything that guys might consider but of course that's a much better fit for us than the tech audience is.

So, for example, we've had some pretty good deals out there. I think we had a couple of vodka ones recently, Kawasaki took out an ad, Old Spice, stuff that people have actually heard of before. To me, that was extremely important because the quality of ads on your site actually impacts how people perceive the quality of your over-all site is, which is really bizarre. For example, if you go look, you'll be lucky to see anything other than mortgage ads and that doesn't really give you a good impression

of the site. But if you saw, Burger King, up there all the time, you're going to think, "Wow, this guy's probably doing pretty good."

Adrian Bye: Yes, right. What kind of CPM rates do you get for advertising on your site?

Drew Curtis: I don't know. Maxim's handling that and I haven't got any idea. In general, what they do is...and this mystifies me because I'm not a sales person, so it doesn't make any sense to me. But basically, they go in a meeting, they just have this ephemeral arguments which is kind of akin to having arguments about the whole meaning of life thing because their arguments are based on nothing other than trying to convince the other guy that they should be paying X amount of money. So, it's really kind of bizarre to me, but it's one of these things that's a mechanism that's been in place now for 150 years. It's not going away anytime soon. So, that's just how it works.

Adrian Bye: So, have the checks gotten bigger since you've been working with Maxim than Federated Media?

Drew Curtis: Yes. It's finally starting to get there. I mean it's not like as far as like the upper level of where we could get to. We're still a long ways from that. But as far as like from the beginning, it took about a year. It actually took closer to like 15 months before we start getting any kind of traction at all on the advertising because of the way that these branded advertisers work. It's kind of simple if you think about it. It can be summed up in an old saying you hear at tech circles all the time, which is, "Nobody ever got fired for buying Microsoft." Which comes from an older saying which was, "Nobody ever got fired for buying IBM," and I'm sure it goes back father than that.

The upshot of it is, is that if you're a media buyer and you have clients which are basically companies because the companies themselves don't do the advertising, they sub it out. So, you have these clients that will basically want to know where did you place their ads and you can safely say New York Times, Washington Post and they're not going to bat an eye. But if you say Fark and they haven't heard of it, or worse, they're not happy about that, then you're in trouble. So, what they tend to do more often than not is they'll take a very large advertising budget, dump it all on one very safe mainstream site and then be done with it.

So, the challenge of working with Maxim for the first 15 months was convincing them it was a good idea, convincing these advertisers that they're not going to be screwed. That it will work, it will perform, nobody's going to fire them, most importantly. Basically, building the brand up so that when they think Maxim they think Fark also being on par. After that happens, then you'll start getting a little traction where first they try to do some sample buys, they do a little bit of goofing around. You'll test the waters a bit first before they start putting larger and larger quantities of money. So far, we're just kind of at that sampling stage right now, but it's encouraging because it's definitely picking up.

Adrian Bye: How do those guys decide, like what is the sample that actually works and what doesn't?

Drew Curtis: As far as I can tell, it's completely arbitrary. I really can't tell because the sales people are trying to get the sample size up because that gets the money up. I really don't see any standard level of that across the board. I mean I've seen it as few as 5,000 pages and as many as 100,000. I mean it just doesn't seem to make any difference one way or the other. It's bizarre.

Adrian Bye: As I understand, your site generates a lot of volume but the advertising on it doesn't generate very high click throughs, right?

Drew Curtis: Well, it depends. We have simultaneously won the records for the best and worst click-through rates ever. It just really depends on the advertising. Some of the advertising does amazingly well and some of it bombs amazingly badly. So, it's really bizarre. Basically, whenever they rank the performance because they're selling these ads on stuff also. We're either the number one or the number four, as far as the click through for impressions.

Adrian Bye: Like let's say if you get an ad that does really well with click throughs, do you care given that that's taking away click through from the rest of the site?

Drew Curtis: Well, it depends. Not really, because when you get to the level of advertisers that we're dealing with, they're more concerned with branding. They want to make sure that people see it and they're just using click through as a way to gauge the effectiveness of the advertisement. They're not really concerned so much with how many people actually go.

For example, one of the things that we've been doing is packaging sponsored links with advertising, it's basically a value ad. We don't charge for it, we have to label them sponsors, but we don't charge money for it. We just basically say, "If you take out an ad, we'll throw one of these in." We've noticed that a sponsored link will send anywhere between 6-25. I think our records is 50,000 clicks to a particular target site and the advertisers we're dealing with just don't care how many people go to them. They're happy about it, don't get me wrong. But they really aren't overly concerned with it as much as they're concerned about the fact that that link will be up on Fark's main page for 36 hours and that's about 3 million page views.

Adrian Bye: Yes, right. When they're doing these test buys, it doesn't really mean anything, does it?

Drew Curtis: No, not at all. In fact, it would come and go. We've had test buys where I've never even seen the ad go by.

Adrian Bye: It went up so quickly that you burned through the impressions?

Drew Curtis: Yes, somebody buys 5,000 impressions, even if they all run them in the same day, Fark is getting like 2 million. So, the odds of me seeing that are...do the math, it's not very high.

Adrian Bye: So, what they're quantifying a successful campaign on is a little bit of an unknown.

Drew Curtis: Yes, basically. It sounds like it's a combination of something that they're looking for and the effectiveness of the sales people in convincing them that it actually worked. Like I said,

again, it's completely bizarre to me because these arguments that I hear, these sales pitches that I should say I hear them making are really based on nothing.

This isn't unique to the Maxim group either. It's basically unique to the entire sales process at that level. It's just kind of mystifying. But that's why I don't do sales.

Adrian Bye: So, you have your volume there. So, what phase of your advertising volume is CPM and then what do you fill out with remnant inventory?

Drew Curtis: We'll probably fill, I've got to say about like 80-90% remnant at this stage, which I'm going to find out is actually not uncommon. Not that high, but you rarely will ever sell all your inventory out. So, having your remnant backup is going to be pretty much a component. In fact, I think half remnant is probably what most people are running on. Aside from the lack of traffic, we have difficulty filling...it's kind of a Catch 22, it's great when you have all that traffic but you also have a difficulty filling all your space up.

So, having remnant guys running, there's no big deal provided it's quality remnant and it is. Like for example, I've seen Blockbuster running their remnant and actually Netflix, too. You end with some amusing situations where sometimes the codes isn't tracking closely enough and you'll have an ad for Blockbuster and Netflix on the same page load at the same time.

Adrian Bye: So, how do you fill that? So, you have Maxim running your branded advertising, who fills in all your remnant inventory?

Drew Curtis: I forget what we're using. The problem in our case was finding somebody who could actually fill that many impressions because we have a lot, as far as the industry goes. The other problem is that you want to make sure you're getting paid on them as well, something reasonable other than \$0.05 per thousand or whatever. I forget who it is we're using, but there's one company in particular...I don't even know where they're located...that manages to fill in about...I think we're getting just direct from them, about 10-15 million views a month, impressions. Then the rest backfills with Google AdSense, which does horrible on Fark.

Adrian Bye: So, you're remnant inventory, you're filling them up as well?

Drew Curtis: Yes.

Adrian Bye: Why would they have issues on quantity given that's not CPM based, that's CPA based, right?

Drew Curtis: Actually, the remnant that we're using is CPM based. There's other remnant out there you can get that's all CPA but the stuff that we're using works with CPM based remnant, they're really rare in the field, basically. You don't see a lot of them around.

Adrian Bye: You use them because...what kind of CPM do they pay you?

Drew Curtis: I don't know. It fluctuates around. I think the CPM is something like...I don't know. I'm kind of speculating it's like \$0.35 to \$0.50 or something like that, but I don't know.

Adrian Bye: Why would you not just go and backfill it with lots of CPA offers?

Drew Curtis: Traditionally on Fark, and I don't know how this works on the record, but traditionally on Fark they perform badly. I don't know if that's a function of our audience or what the deal is but they've generally not worked so we quit doing them.

Adrian Bye: So, right now, you have three stages then. You have your 10-20% of branded advertising that's being sold out for you by Maxim, then you have, I guess another 70% that's being sold on a CPM basis at about \$0.50 through this network, which you're not sure what they're name is.

Drew Curtis: Actually, it isn't 70%. That 70% is a breakdown between those guys and Google AdSense. I don't know what the ratio is of that, it changes month to month.

Adrian Bye: Then the last part is filled in by Google AdSense and you just...

Drew Curtis: Yes. AdSense really, really fails on Fark. I think it has to do with the fact that AdSense always tries to read a page and gauge the content of the page and deliver ads accordingly. But the stuff we have up on Fark is so bizarre and perverse that it can't figure it out. We just switched over to a new AdSense program that PrimaryMedia actually is heading up. Now that we're about two months into it, even they are confused and I warned them this would happen about how low the revenue is coming off of it, it's bizarre. Nobody could figure it out. But I think it's maybe an unsolvable problem.

Adrian Bye: Right. Why are you filling it in with AdSense? Why not get a couple of networks to fill it in with that rather than AdSense? I mean the payout should be higher.

Drew Curtis: We're doing a test run on it. Supposedly they've redid the code and this works better. So, we're trying it for a few months but so far no good. We may be interested in looking at something else long term.

Adrian Bye: Have you tried any of like the behavioral networks like BlueLithium or TACODA?

Drew Curtis: No. I haven't tried any of those guys yet. I would suspect we're going to have the same problems but again, once this AdSense stuff goes down the tubes like I expect it will, we'll probably go looking again.

Adrian Bye: I see. You are actually going to have to drop AdSense.

Drew Curtis: Well, we don't have to but if it's not working we'd be silly not to.

Adrian Bye: What kind of CPMs do you get on AdSense?

Drew Curtis: I don't know. It's horrible. But I mean it's only like a few thousand bucks a month I know is what they're making through it. Considering the million of pages you're getting it should be enormously higher. Even Google is concerned about it, by the way. They called me in for a meeting about a year and a half ago down in San Francisco to talk about it because they couldn't figure it out.

Adrian Bye: So, what the AdSense is running it like \$0.05 CPM or something, is it?

Drew Curtis: ...or something, yes. The problem is that the ads that are running on Fark I think are either not relevant or not interesting. At the end of the day, AdSense is actually based on click through even if they try to deliver the money based on effective CPM. The fact is the word effective means not CPM so they're basically...for whatever reason they don't do well.

Adrian Bye: So, do you ever work with individual advertisers? I mean let's say I've got an ad campaign that I want to run, that I think could work, maybe even is a little bit too aggressive and you think it would piss off your users, would you still take it? Do you work with individual advertiser? What are the limits on who you will work with?

Drew Curtis: What we do right now is we'd work with anybody but in general now, the way that it's set up, if anybody comes to us individually then we basically hand them off to Maxim. We'll still work in liaison with it because there's a number of advertisers, like Honda for example, wanted to advertise on Fark but not on Maxim Magazine site for whatever reason.

So, we'll still work on that but in general, there's a lot of like...I'm probably in favor of less intrusive ads than most websites are. For example, we don't do interstitials. We don't do pop-ups. I don't like floating ads either, the ones that kind of follow you around. But somebody submitted one, it was a test one for Corona recently, that I actually liked. What it was is you've got your Leader Board across the top and you've got your 300 x 250 square rectangular ad kind of down below. What it would do is it would run an ad up on the top saying something like, "Corona Rocks" or "It's Great." In a 300 x 250 they had a martini glass or a beer glass or something like that and basically this hand would come down, out of the top ad into the side ad and grab the lime or the olive, I forget what the hell it was, out of the glass and then pull it back away again. I liked that because it gets your attention. It doesn't last long enough to stay in the way. So, by virtue of that fact, it's pretty unobtrusive and I thought that was pretty cool.

Adrian Bye: But that's still like a branded advertising. What about...you see on the social networks they have lots of like the Smileys campaigns and that sort of stuff. I don't know what's up with it...

Drew Curtis: Yes.

Adrian Bye: ...one must presume that they're performing at the highest effective CPM. Would you rather take Google AdSense at \$0.05 CPM rather than Smileys at \$0.50?

Drew Curtis: Yes. Well, the problem is that they don't make that much money for us on our site. I'm sure they probably do well for those guys but when we run those ads they just bomb. In fact, very

early on, I forget what ad network it was but it was a CPA based ad network that we...I forget. It was one of the big guys that got bought. It wasn't DoubleClick or ValueClick but they're part of them now. Actually, threw us off their network because we had record-low CPM clicks on that, nobody was checking them out. It was so bad they actually accused us of not running the ad.

Adrian Bye: But they were running on a CPA, weren't they, or was it running on a CPM?

Drew Curtis: They were running a CPA and they could track it but they were accusing us of faking the data or something like that after awhile because they said it could just not possibly be as low as it was.

Adrian Bye: So, let's say that I met you somewhere. Let's say we had a dinner, conversational kind of stuff and I've got an offer that I think that could work. Let's say it's how to make money playing poker or something like that. How do I get that to you and get you to run that on your site?

Drew Curtis: We would basically then go ahead and take that up to Maxim for a big ad buy. We have classified ads though which is probably a better test to see whether or not it'll actually work because my general experience has been that those things fail horribly on our site, for whatever reason. I don't know if it's because of the readership or what, they tend to be smarter than the average bear. They tend to recognize this stuff and ignore it immediately so we've had pretty much little or to no success with that kind of thing.

Adrian Bye: You're saying, "Take it to Maxim" but Maxim only wants to sell branded advertising and they've got...

Drew Curtis: Right, and that's how they'll charge for it. Basically, what their argument will be is if that actually is going to make that much money on a CPA or CPC basis, then why not rip odds off? Pay out what you would consider to be a lesser rate.

For example, I had a guy...this isn't an exact example...but I had a guy, for example, that wanted to do a branded credit card with Fark and he said something like, "Well, I'll split the proceeds with you and you'll make \$30,000 in a month." I said, "Okay, how about this. How about you just give me \$5,000 rather than split the proceeds and you can keep the rest?" Which is essentially the offer Maxim makes back, and the guy refused to do it. I always thought that was kind of weird because to me if there are huge payouts going on CPA and CPC basis, why not rip off the media client, go ahead and take their flat rate and just keep the lion's share of the money rather than giving half of it away?

Adrian Bye: So, what you're generally doing when you fold them to Maxim then is you're saying, "Sorry, we're not interested in a CPA offer."

Drew Curtis: Right.

Adrian Bye: That Maxim is the one saying no. Is that right?

Drew Curtis: Exactly. But if it is a good CPA offer, if it's high performing and whatnot, and it doesn't need to be highly targeted, then it would probably be to someone's advantage to source through a CPM model instead and keep more of the money. It's basically you convert a percentage payout to a flat rate payout and you should be able to make money on that, in theory.

Adrian Bye: It depends on what the CPM is. But the typical offer like that is only going to work at a maximum of something like \$0.50...

Drew Curtis: I'm not sure yet.

Adrian Bye: ...but that's not the CPM rate that you care about, or do you?

Drew Curtis: Yes, right. I don't know. That's a good question. That's right on the border of me caring or not caring.

Adrian Bye: So, if I come to you with an offer, and let's say it is a CPA offer but I really want to get it going, what if I come to you and I say, "Okay, Drew, here's \$2,000. Can you give me a shot, give me \$2,000 worth of CPM on your site?"

Drew Curtis: Yes, probably so.

Adrian Bye: You would consider running something like that.

Drew Curtis: Yes.

Adrian Bye: In that instance you wouldn't refer me over to Maxim, you would take it yourself.

Drew Curtis: Actually, contractually we have to, so, I would have to turn it over to Maxim no matter what but they don't reject stuff.

Adrian Bye: So, I then take my \$2,000, go and give it to Maxim, what kind of CPM rate are they going to give me for that?

Drew Curtis: I don't know. That's a good question.

Adrian Bye: Alright, okay. They're probably going to be wanting at least a dollar or two, aren't they, or is that not correct?

Drew Curtis: I would think so, yes. I would be shocked if they would mess with anything less than that.

Adrian Bye: So, essentially, you're really only spending any time on branded advertising, which you still give to Maxim.

Drew Curtis: Right. If you think about it, the reason is because while we're not necessarily topping out yet, this is the only way that we can top out yet. For example, at some point... Like I met the guy who runs the fake Steve Jobs blog recently, we were talking about stuff in general and he told me what his advertising deal was that Forbes was giving him. He thought that he wasn't getting enough money but it was actually phenomenal. I'm not going to disclose what it was just in case it's some kind of secret. I mean I don't know he wants me to tell people or not but it was awesome. I wish we could get that. But it has to do with the fact that you've got Forbes who basically is charging \$50-75 CPMs because they're business outfit and therefore their ads are highly targeted, aimed towards financial companies which have got large amounts of cash. In this business, as a website, the only way you could hit your maximum revenue potential is by going the CPM route. So, at some point, you just make the decision and go that way a hundred percent.

Adrian Bye: He, for example, he has no remnant inventory on his site.

Drew Curtis: No. That guys basically...I think he got bought by Forbes or something or other, but he's getting revenue based off of CPM stuff, and because Forbes is selling it so high, he's actually making great money for what he's got.

Adrian Bye: Right. With your inventory, do you switch networks a lot? I mean do you do different things to monetize as a publisher side when you see that things aren't performing or you just kind of let it run and not worry about it?

Drew Curtis: I kind of let it run and not worry about it because at the end of the day, what's really going to make it is Maxim going out and selling high dollar CPMs and probably close to selling the entire site out, that's the direction we're moving in. I don't know if it's going to get there any time soon or not but that's where we want to be. So, all the rest of this stuff is really just kind of superfluous.

Adrian Bye: Right.

Drew Curtis: But we're unique in that respect. I'm definitely not recommending that everybody who has a website go do this because honestly, most can't. Even high volume sites can't do it. If anything to me also, too, knowing what I know about this because we've been working with an incredibly capable group of people for about a year and half, and it took 15 months to get the first amount of traction. I think that there are many ramifications down the road for a lot of these Web 2.0 sites that are looking to be advertising based as well, because it takes a while to get going on this kind of stuff. I don't think they realize this.

Adrian Bye: Did you leave all that money behind when you went from Federated Media over to Maxim?

Drew Curtis: Not really. Where we really got hit was back in early 2006, where basically, we threw off all of our low dollar ads, we had t-shirt companies and what-not. We, basically, stopped doing those kinds of ads because you can't convince an advertiser they should be paying high CPM rates when they can obviously see that you've got garbage ads on your site that definitely didn't pay that

much money. So, you have to basically run no ads for a little while in order to get people to finally make that jump, and that hurt. The entire year of 2006 was a massive struggle because of that but at the end it started paying off. So, we made it through but that was rough.

Adrian Bye: Are you sure that's the case? I mean when a big brand advertiser looks at the site, if they see low dollar, low CPM type ads running on the site, they would actually say, "No, I'm not advertising here."

Drew Curtis: I was told that was the case. I don't know that for sure.

Adrian Bye: Right. But anyway, you're starting to get, even with your 10% or 20% filling in of your branded advertising, it's starting to work out.

Drew Curtis: Yes, because once you get the high dollar CPMs you don't need a whole lot of sales in order to match your previous revenue level...

Adrian Bye: Right.

Drew Curtis: ...because it wasn't all that good to begin with. So yes, we're in kind of a different spot, like I said, because if you had your own blog, for example, that's getting 50,000 page views a day or whatever that's substantial, probably still not high enough to knock down any mainstream ads.

Adrian Bye: Right. Now, what about other places where you can run advertising, for example, your sign-up process, putting something like car registration in there, let's say when they're signing up they get asked, "Are you interested in buying a new car?" and the Fark registration says, "Are you interested in buying a new car?" If they say, "Yes" that lead data is then sent to someone and sold for like a dollar or two a lead.

Drew Curtis: Yes, eventually. That's something we've been really remiss on as well. It's been on our to-do list for quite awhile but we've got sidetracked with a number of other projects this year. I just think it works just because you see newspapers doing this. That was the entire reason they wanted to have you to register on their site to read articles on the first place was not because they wanted to track you but it was because they wanted you to fill out their surveys and they could sell out that information.

I was at a managing editor's conference down in Florida, this was about four years ago now I guess, where somebody actually asked the question what's the value of the customer that comes and registers so they could read through the articles but click, "Don't contact me under any circumstances" and the value is zero, as it turns out. So, that's the reason registration was around. The reason that it's going away now is because sites that did have your registration saw that their traffic number has dropped. Considering the way everything is going on the internet, if your traffic number starts dropping and you fall out of the top 10 hunt on comScore Media Metrix, you might as well just go ahead and set fire to the building that you work in, walk away and leave and never come back because you're dead.

Adrian Bye: So, everything depends on what comScore says and that's it.

Drew Curtis: Pretty much, yes. That's what they do. The mainstream archive just pull the top 10 numbers and they go from there. You could give them all kinds of numbers all day long but at the end of the day, comScore is what counts and they don't really care about anything else. Which is why you're getting pretty interesting things happening. For example, Major League Baseball, MLB.com, just filed a cease and desist against Quantcast and Nielsen claiming that their numbers were so wrong they were actually being harmed by them. I'm watching how this plays out because I'm considering doing exactly the same thing because we're in the same boat. If they don't track work numbers and they don't track college numbers then that's basically 90% of our rates as well.

Adrian Bye: So, maybe this Quantcast is a better solution where the stats are opened up.

Drew Curtis: I think so. But again, the problem is that at the end of the day you can still end up fooling this stuff. I think the reason that people like the comScore and Nielsen is because they've spent literally years building argument saying that their numbers are not only accurate but impossible to fake because you can't fake comScore traffic. There are a couple of tricks you can do but in general, it's very difficult to do.

Adrian Bye: So, you're saying there really isn't any good solution to all of this.

Drew Curtis: Well, there actually isn't. What's funny is, because at the end of the day it still boils down to a sales pitch. So, for example, even though our comScore numbers are abysmal and ridiculous, we're still making sales and that has to do with the sales pitch. I mean the comScore number is the slam-dunk. If you end up on the top 10 list and you could stay there, then you're set. You've got nothing to worry about, you'll sell every ad pitch you ever make.

Adrian Bye: So those guys that are in top 10 on comScore, they're selling out 100% of their inventory, are they?

Drew Curtis: They probably are. I don't know that for sure but it wouldn't surprise me because, again, it's a no brain thing. If you are a media buyer, you go back to your boss at the end of the day and they ask where did you buy, even if they've never heard of the site but they can say, yes, they're ranked 5 on comScore for males age 18 – 35, you're not going to get fired for that. That's why they like it; it's a no-brainer.

Adrian Bye: So, back to the car registration, lead generation stuff, let's say I wanted leads from you site. People are interested in buying a new car from Fark and I came to you and said, "Hey, Drew, I want to get some of those." How do I get started on a deal with you on something like that?

Drew Curtis: Currently, we don't track that information. That's something that we're going to be doing here pretty soon. We have a list of user profile enhancements that we want to put out there, not only being able to track that but also being able to allow people to participate if they want to. So, I would look for that sometime...I don't know, depends on when we can get on it but sometime, maybe like, second quarter 2008.

Adrian Bye: So, right now, users don't register...the only place they register for is TOTALFARK, is that right?

Drew Curtis: They register for accounts to talk. There are about 370,000 registered accounts right now but you have to have an account to make comments, but we don't use anything other than that.

Adrian Bye: What about at the time when those accounts get started up, can you ask them the "I want a new car" question then?

Drew Curtis: No, and that's something we need to add.

Adrian Bye: So, can you talk a little bit about...I'll ask these questions and tell me if I'm out of line...can you talk about where the revenue comes from on your site. You have TOTALFARK, which is a subscription service. You have CPM advertising through Maxim. You have CPM remnant inventory through the unknown person that does that. You have Google AdSense and you also have the Google search bar. Is that correct? Is there anything else that I'm missing?

Drew Curtis: Yes, that's pretty much it. It's also interesting, too, that the Google search revenue, while it was never good, has been steadily dropping, the advent of the Google toolbar and the fact that now that there's the search bar on Microsoft Internet Explorer, it's going down. It was never a big deal for us anyway but I don't know if there are any sites that rely on it heavily, but if there are they should probably rethink that.

Adrian Bye: You have a defaulting that when people type in to search the web, is that because you get paid for AdSense through that, or AdWords?

Drew Curtis: No. It's because it turns out that's what most people use them for. We tried to take that section down a couple of times and both times we just got bombarded by e-mails because people have actually...and this is weird because this is unusual in the sense that most sites just doesn't work. We have a lot of people, an enormous number of people who use Fark as their homepage. When they fire-up a browser, it goes to Fark. They want that search box there so they can treat it like Google rather than starting and having it go straight to Google and typing in stuff, let's go straight to Fark and because we had a search button on there, then they keep their page on Fark, as their homepage. If we remove that, all of a sudden the usefulness of that stops and our traffic goes down.

Adrian Bye: That is fascinating. Is that the reason why most sites built it that way or...?

Drew Curtis: I don't know why most sites do it because I can't imagine that most sites are a prime start-up page destination. If it was about anybody else, I don't think I can recommend it because I don't think anybody would use it, honestly. I mean people are pretty much used to typing it in the browsers or what-not, we just have a bunch of people that are used to doing it on Fark because they make it their homepage. If you happen to have a site that is a lot of people's homepage and you want to have it up there but otherwise you wouldn't probably want to bother at all.

Adrian Bye: Very cool. Alright. Actually, with the revenue streams, can you talk about percentages of the numbers they generate? Like what are...

Drew Curtis: I don't actually know what they are but I do know that the TOTALFARK money is enough to where...and that basically carried us through to 2006 when we had no advertisements. So that's basically like our baseline-keep-the-lights-on money. So, the rest of it actually does pretty well, it's just over the top stuff.

Adrian Bye: We're talking like 90% of it comes from your CPM advertising?

Drew Curtis: You know, I don't know. I don't think so. I think it's lower than that. I'd have to check the numbers.

Adrian Bye: But you do have it? It's pretty much broken down over across the entire site. I mean, so you have sort of three or four independent revenue streams.

Drew Curtis: Yes, that's right. That's really, generally, what you want to do in any business. You want to have as many revenue streams as possible, even the ones that don't pay well.

Adrian Bye: There is, obviously, one other that we didn't talk about, and that is the book.

Drew Curtis: Yes.

Adrian Bye: Do you want to talk a little bit about the book? I mean that's obviously a new revenue stream for you and the thinking behind it. I've read it and I thought it was very funny. Your style of writing is very unusual, I've got to say.

Drew Curtis: Yes. People say I write like I talk.

Adrian Bye: Yes. I'd say that's an understatement. It's like when you are talking.

Drew Curtis: Yes, pretty much.

Adrian Bye: It's a good read. So, what was the thinking behind the book and how is that impacting the rest of what you're doing with the site?

Drew Curtis: Well, the initial concept that the book people wanted me to do was they wanted me to funniest stories that ever have been on Fark but I couldn't get excited about that prospect because it just didn't do anything for me. But I thought about media patterns, the ways that I thought this crap news coming into play, how the news uses it, what they use it for, when it comes online and when it doesn't.

For example, any time there's a major news event, all of a sudden the amount of crap news that we could find – because if it's on Fark, that's what we're looking for – drops considerably. Also happens

at other times of the year. For example, the pretty worst weeks for garbage news are the week before Labor Day and the week between Christmas and New Year's. The reason for that, interestingly, is because nobody is working. The interesting part about that is that the flow of news goes down when there aren't any journalists around. You'd think that would be kind of ass backwards but it turns out that's the world we live in.

So, I worked on finding a whole bunch of patterns in order to try to classify these articles as we came up with a number of them, which has been interesting watching the reaction of journalists who read this because they're really kind of blown away by it because it pretty much nails it. There was a gal locally here in Lexington, Kentucky, who works at a local newspaper. Actually, in one of our articles went and got excerpts out of her Journalism 101 textbook and put them right up to the stuff I was saying, it just matched perfectly. The only difference was that I was swearing a lot more and I'm questioning why people are doing it, as opposed to the Journalism 101 textbook, which just says, "Do this."

Adrian Bye: I read the book and came away feeling like I don't understand how I trusted the news at all.

Drew Curtis: It's all the stuff that everybody...we've all noticed this stuff in the news but we've never really thought about it that much. I mean the only reason I had is because I do it all day long. But once you start paying attention to the patterns, like the media fear mongering where they're trying to scare the crap out of you or same old articles that appear at the same time every year like clockwork or talking to nut jobs who believe in Bigfoot and the moon landing and what-not, the moon landing s fake rather. You see all these articles that basically just up there for fear and it's interesting because it also allows you to then: (1) you can educate yourself and say, okay, this is garbage news, I don't need to pay attention to this closely as I was. For example, a lot of this stuff that I was saying actually meshed up a lot with my friend Tim Ferriss' book *The 4-Hour Workweek*, which he wrote about, basically, he's argument was is that you don't need to watch news but once a day. I told him probably not but once week or conversationally I told him you don't even need to watch the news, just wait until somebody says, "Hey, did you hear about such and such?" If it's of any interest to you then look it up. Don't sit in front of the news, sit there and wait for it to happen because in reality, there isn't a whole lot of stuff going on that needs any attention whatsoever.

Adrian Bye: So, your comment is that you should only watch the news like once a week or less?

Drew Curtis: Yes. You could certainly get away with it. I mean as far as what you would need to survive, it's probably not even that much. News is just a different form of entertainment, masquerading as something that they tell you, you should actually be doing but really isn't.

Adrian Bye: So, where, in your opinion, is the most credible news source?

Drew Curtis: That's a good question. In the States, it's probably a combination of NPR and the Christian Science Monitor. Those guys do a pretty good job. Internationally, the BBC does pretty well, although they're starting to drift a little bit because they've got consultants that are trying to tell them how to capture the youth market. Unfortunately, they're telling them to do things like

make the BBC look more like Facebook. Make BBC have comments, which is completely pointless in my opinion because nobody really has anything interesting to add to the conversation other than racist and nasty comments.

So, it's interesting to see whether or not they'll continue to maintain where they are but my gut feeling is they're probably going to start slipping here over time.

Adrian Bye: So, the book is called *It's Not News, It's Fark: How Mass Media Tries to Pass Off Crap as News*. One of the things I...I don't actually remember which chapters it was in, unfortunately, but it did help me understand a little bit more about your site, how it's working and just in general, how your business works.

Drew Curtis: Yes.

Adrian Bye: You also included comments from a lot of your readers in the book. Did that help encourage them to buy the book?

Drew Curtis: I don't know. That's a good question. I don't know if anybody bought it because we quoted them, per se, because there's no index, so I don't know. Somebody put an index together online, it wasn't me. But I don't know if anybody bought it specifically because of that. The main reason was because...I'm not really trying to be serious, per se, when I make the point about them passing this stuff off. I'm trying to make a point though and the best way to do it is you make it funny. A lot of the comments and examples that we used were absolutely hysterical. For example, there was one in the media fear mongering articles we talked about was how Kentucky is spending it's Homeland Security dollars on anything it can because we don't have a lot of Homeland Security issues being a land-locked state. I don't know if I've seen any terrorists driving around the backcountry roads.

So, in order to keep this money, they have to spend it every year. One year they spent their Homeland Security money on simulating an attack on a goat fair. One of the comments that somebody put in there said, "I don't know about you guys but I'll never forget the day that I saw that first goat slamming into the World Trade Center." I thought that pretty much sums it up right there.

Adrian Bye: Yes, right. So, how does the book fit into your overall strategy. I mean when we've talked privately, you've talked about things like helping you gain more branding, can you maybe explain that goal and how that works?

Drew Curtis: Yes. One of the things you can do with the book is...to give you a better example that most of your listeners would probably be able to key in better...look at what Robert Scoble is doing. Basically, all he's doing is...the guys has nothing to talk about. Everything that comes out of his mouth is generally garbage anyway, but he's able to key into the fact that news media will always give you time to talk about a book, no matter what the book is, even if they don't agree with you because they're set up to do that.

So, one of the things that the book allowed me to do...I think I did something like 350 radio interviews in the first four days that the book was out, which again is more face time in front of an audience that hasn't necessarily heard about it. Then you can also, if you're lucky enough, set yourself up as a media expert on this stuff. I've actually been called in a couple of times for national news shows to discuss...usually what they call in the media cycle, they call it "Has the media gone too far?" Which is basically the last question anybody asks before they stop talking about something. Anytime you see media covering itself or covering a story, you know they've completely run out of stuff and they've started having me call in and discuss the patterns basically, on what's happened, where they've gone wrong and all that kind of stuff.

Again, that's just more promotion. Having my face out in front of people, talking about it, if people like what I have to say but they've never heard about me or the website, then they'll go check it out – in theory. It's more of the publicity machine, basically.

Adrian Bye: I remember reading that section in the book about has the media gone too far and that's the media cycle, and laughing seeing that because it's so right but I've never picked that as a pattern before.

Drew Curtis: Yes, we've all noticed it. I mean you've heard them talking about it and usually they'll do it in particularly ridiculous cases. For example, the one I cited was when Dick Cheney had his hunting accident and shot a guy. Eight days in, I was sitting in an airport watching CNN wasting an entire morning talking about whether or not the media should be covering this stuff at all as opposed to other stuff, you'll see them asking this question over and over again. As I say in the book, if you have to ask the question, "Has the media gone too far?" and you're the media, then you have gone too far.

Adrian Bye: So, the book then, it actually gave you a reason to do more public relations.

Drew Curtis: Yes, exactly. There are different factors to it. That wasn't the primary motivator but it's one of those deals where because it's an available avenue, you take advantage of it. It's also an additional revenue stream. I had a blast writing it, I'm probably going to do another one. Not in the same vein but something slightly different and it just leads on to other things.

Adrian Bye: Do you think then that the book is also a big reason why you're traffic is up the way it is?

Drew Curtis: It certainly might be. I've noticed on Amazon there have been a few reviews posted by people that have never heard of the website before. I thought that was interesting because that was actually the whole point of doing it, is to try to capture an audience of people that haven't heard of Fark. I think right now, Maxim's just off the cuff estimated, they think about 2 out of 10 of all people in the United States have heard of Fark, which is good. I mean that's absolutely fantastic but it needs to be 8 not 2.

Adrian Bye: Yes, right. Do you have any sales numbers for the book? I think you've mentioned it's been selling well.

Drew Curtis: Yes, 25,000 copies in the first 12 weeks, which I thought sucks but they told me it actually puts it in the top 1% of all books sold this year, so far. So, I guess book sales move a lot slower than we all think they do.

Adrian Bye: The interesting thing about your branding strategy, I mean Maxim carrying the book into meetings when go to sale guys or...how does that work?

Drew Curtis: Yes. As a matter fact, that's exactly what happens. We've got a box of a hundred books and anytime we get called out on sales, we always take a couple and drop them off. It's very similar to what people do with brochures, dossiers or whatever. People have got all these sort of materials. It's the same concept behind having your logo printed on a pen that you leave at somebody's office except in my case it's an entire book.

Adrian Bye: Cool. Alright, well, that's everything that I can think of to ask you. Is there anything that you want to talk about that we haven't covered?

Drew Curtis: No, I don't think so. We've pretty much hit everything. If something occurs to me, I'll be sure to let you know.

Adrian Bye: Cool. Well, Drew, thanks very much for your time.

Drew Curtis: No problem. Thank you.