



Last Words



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The Geek In Me

Over the summer my wife and I hosted a dinner party for a former client, a long-time friend and both their spouses. Over dinner, one of the spouses and I discovered that we were both documentary junkies and excitedly compared notes about various shows that we watched on a regular basis. During this conversation I mentioned that my family rarely watched any television show in real time, preferring instead to watch programs recorded on a digital video recorder that I built. I was describing how I had hooked up a computer to our large screen television and how we used a wireless mouse as a remote control when my former client, John, looked at me and said, in an incredulous voice, “You are a geek!”

Why the incredulity in John’s voice? For reasons I don’t fully understand, it seems to be fashionable to eschew any possibility of being labeled a geek. Indeed, many people seem to distance themselves from a close association with technology and take pride in proclaiming their ignorance of technical matters.

Yes, I’m a geek and I’m proud of it! My wife, Tracy, jokingly refers to stores like Future Shop, Best Buy, Compusmart and The Source (I still think of them as “Radio Shack”) as Mike’s “toy stores”. I eagerly look forward to reading the Future Shop flyer every Friday almost as much as I look forward to reading the business section and comics (in that order) each morning. Tracy has bought so many gifts for me at these stores that they know her by name and fight for the opportunity to sell her the latest gadget.

Are you a geek?

I was recently watching a biography on Jeff Foxworthy, a southern U.S. comedian, (I told you, I’m a documentary junkie) and saw him perform a comedy routine in which he makes fun of southern rednecks. Jeff’s routine consists of a series of one-liners, each asking a question that if answered in the affirmative might mean that you are a redneck. After the tears of laughter stopped streaming down my face (I grew up in the U.S. and I still have family living in the southern U.S.), I thought that a similar format could be used

to answer the question “Are you a geek?” So, with apologies to Jeff Foxworthy, let’s see if you can answer one or more of these questions in the affirmative (I know that I can!):

If ...

- have more computers in your house than people, or,
- you know that ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’, ‘D’, ‘E’, and ‘F’ can be numbers as well as letters, or,
- you know at least one person whose computer has less RAM than your video card, or,
- someone says “closet” and your first thought is about “switches” or “hubs” and not “coats” or “clothes”, or,
- every license plate you see while driving is a UNIX command, or,
- your first question about a new house is “how far is it from the CO?” instead of “Where’s the nearest school?” or,
- you paid more for your first computer than your first car,

... then you might be a geek!

So, are you a geek? I think that there is a bit of geek in all of us, related to and in many ways similar to our inner child. Like our inner child, our inner geek delights in exploring anything new and strives to figure out how it works and for what practical purpose it might be used. Our inner geek, when appropriately harnessed and not left entirely to its own devices, can help us look beyond using technology for technology’s sake and see technology as a tool to improve how we accomplish a wide variety of tasks.

Are you a geek? Are there other questions that might be asked to identify a geek?

Drop me a line at mmartineau@branhamgroup.com and share your thoughts on how to recognize a geek and, if you dare, let me know if you think that you might be a geek. ●