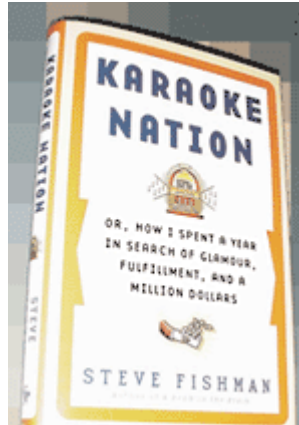


Sandra Knowles, *Founding Editor*

Digital Times is a "for eCommerce newsletter reporting on the development and/or availability of interactive products and services."  
<http://www.digitaltimes.com>, .net, org., .ws, .cc, .us

## Inside Story: INTERNET ENTREPRENEURS

Author **Steve Fishman's** initially reluctant foray into Internet entrepreneurship during one year of his life is an entertaining read! He compares the businesslike, sensible, rational organization man of the fifties and sixties with numerous passionate, manipulative, over-the-top characters claiming territorial rights during the waning Internet Gold Rush. His East Coast perspective is quite different from mine, as I was "running with the wolves" in California's Silicon Valley before, during, and after the crest of the big wave. I, too, met some of his heroes including Joe Parks, the brash founder of the Kozmo delivery service.



Reviewed!

In the early days, an 'Interactive Advertising Conference' sponsored by CreaTECH was held in December 1994 at the Parc Hotel in San Francisco. None of us were exactly sure what kind of advertising that was, but it sounded exciting. I'd already applied for, and received the servicemark [Interactive Advertising](#). I wanted it because it sounded sexy and cool! Unabashedly, I envisioned myself as a "change agent" and "innovator."

My crowd was engaged in dreaming up great websites and potential businesses. To 'surf the SuperHighway' We had to learn Unix commands. Once logged on, [remember those 9.6 kbs dial-up modems that took f-o-r-e-v-e-r?] I was never sure if I could connect, what I would find or where I was going, but it became an adventure! I came across impressive reports and documents, like the [U.S. Government's Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata](#) and [Certified Secure Digital Facsimiles](#) [FAX machines]. In 1995 my friends and I figured out the value in registering domain names with Internic as fast as we could think them up. [Anyone could register them for free, I might add.](#) I was trying to learn HTML and build web sites. Unfortunately, there weren't any books on writing HTML just yet. I knew some programmers who had figured it out--they always figure everything out, don't they? Local girl Laura LeMay was the first author to get the job done in 1994. She was in her early 20's when she wrote "Teach Yourself Web Publishing with HTML in a Week" published by SAMS. It was the very 1st HTML bible to hit the computer section of bookstores! When we went to her book signing and lecture, she asked how many people in the room had successfully created a web page: two people raised their hands! Laura went on to author or co-author 48 books for SAMS on web scripting, programming and graphics. Today she suffers from tendonitis and extreme burnout.

Now, back to **Mr. Fishman's book, Karaoke Nation.**

Continued --Scroll Down



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EBAY

TIPS

1.5 years ago [and this last week] I sold some things on EBAY. Previously it hadn't been a bad experience, but frustrating in many ways. Billpoint was a payment option that was a pain to understand or implement. I auctioned 4-5 things and it took a long time to receive payment, as all of the buyers sent checks or money orders in the mail!

Last week I decided to sell a few things on EBAY again. My 4 items sold for \$550. Now that EBAY owns PayPal I was paid instantly and seamlessly, as buyers preferred to pay online, by credit card!

EBAY charges a small fee for the listing, a fee for photos [first photo is free], a fee for "BOLD" type, a fee for including a photo with the listing, etc.

Fees EBAY took from my recent auction(s):

- 0.56 / 5.00 Sale
- 0.97 / 19.05 Sale
- 1.58 / 40.00 Sale
- 15.75 / \$500.00 Sale

Auction options are: 3, 5, 7 or 10 days. I noted other similar items were listed for 7 days, so it appeared advantageous to list mine for 5! The same principle of opening a gas station across from another, to grab some of their business, I guess.

**Mr. Fishman's vision was to:**

- a. be a successful Internet entrepreneur and
  - b. make a million dollars in the space of one year,
- aided by \$3,000 in seed money from his employer.

Karaoke Nation [shortened to Knation] was to be a community -- a hip-hop karaoke website in a 3d environment, perhaps, where people sing to each other. Some of my favorite passages:

"The prototype of the karaoke application was installed on my laptop. Getmusic.com, a project of Vivendi Universal, would soon sign up for KaraokeStation, as Oddcast called it. Russell looked at the application. He liked it still. He really did believe this hip-hop karaoke thing was interesting. He took the microphone I'd brought along. Would he like to sing "New York, New York," the Frank Sinatra version, or "The Way I Am" by rapper Eminem? "Hip-hop," said Russell, and in an instant he began to rap along at Eminem's words scrolled. "I am what I say I am," Russell sang in a drone that seemed to have something to do with his uneasy stomach. Then Russell, as was his way, picked up a phone, hitting the speaker button. He called an executive vice president. "I'm here with my good friend," he began, then turned to me. "What's your name?"

Karaoke Nation is published by The Free Press, a division of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

**Inside Story: Internet  
ENTREPRENEURS, Cont'd**  
WIN a copy of KARAOKE NATION

and,  
"the majority of working people could no longer imagine anything better to do with their lives than work. In the Internet Age, work was living. As one pundit explained, work, and in particular working long hours, was "more morally edifying" than the "leisure diversions that many imagine to be the end and meaning of life."

and,  
"Recently, I'd had a very encouraging meeting with Jan Horsfall, CEO of phonefree, whose technology enabled Internet telephone service computer-to-computer. Sound quality wasn't all that good. Still, he told me he expected to "take AT&T down." As he said that, I noticed his shoes: They were flip-flops.

and,  
Of course, I was determined to push ahead. You had to be. Every entrepreneur said so. There were *a/ways* going to be setbacks. What could be more entrepreneurial than setbacks? Here were symptoms, we suggested, of latent entrepreneurship. (Treatable these days, it occurred to me, with Ritalin.)

**EBAY**

**TIPS, Cont'd**

A digital camera comes in handy. I took photos of my items, cropped them in an imaging application, and easily uploaded the .jpg files to EBAY. You can submit as many images as you

like, but I recommend NOT overwhelming potential buyers with images. Personally, I don't like boring descriptions with a lot of text, so I also uploaded the image(s) to a directory on one of my website(s). In the description of my article I included a link to that image so the buyer could see what the article looks like WITHIN THE DESCRIPTION. EBAY puts the photo at the bottom of the page, after the description so the buyer has to scrollll down to see it!

Shipping Costs: You can list a "ballpark figure" for shipping and handling, if you want -- along with a caveat that actual cost(s) will be calculated depending on the location and preferences of the successful bidder. When the auction closes, give buyer the prices and shipping options so he/she will include that amount with their total payment.

One of the winning bidders sent me this email as SOON as the auction ended.  
Hi,  
Looks like I'm the winner.  
Address is: xxxxxxxxxxxxxx  
Let me know what the total (unit + shipping) is and I will use PayPal.

Not all buyers are like that. EBAY sends an End of Auction notice that includes the email address of the buyer. I immediately emailed the remaining three, asking for their address so I could calculate shipping costs. Later, I realized that EBAY had included the ZIP CODE of the successful bidder in their notice to me, so theoretically I could have calculated shipping options online, then clicked on the link to send a final invoice to the winner immediately. I highly recommend that you do this, and SEND the final invoice to the buyer without delay. If you don't, and you quoted a "ballpark" shipping fee, [along with the caveat that final shipping is depending on buyer's location and preferences] the buyer might make payment instantly, and then you are stuck when shipping exceeds your "ballpark." I sent an invoice to my 4th buyer the next day, having done the calculation and realizing that shipping was 1.50 more than my "ballpark" figure. I wanted him to pay for it, not me. He had NOT paid instantly through PayPal, so there was time.

EBAY Story Will Be Continued Next Month...

-editor

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