

Stet

Independent Writers of Chicago

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GET THE LOWDOWN ON THIS GREAT EMERGING STRATEGY STRAIGHT FROM THE FOUNDER

Networkling: The Hot New Way to Grow Your Business

Networking as we know it is dead; making connections that are mutually beneficial and lead to new business clients is alive and well. If you are having trouble making those worthwhile connections you've come to the right place — the Tuesday, May 14 IWOC meeting in the Paige Smith Room of the Gratz Center, at E. Chestnut St.



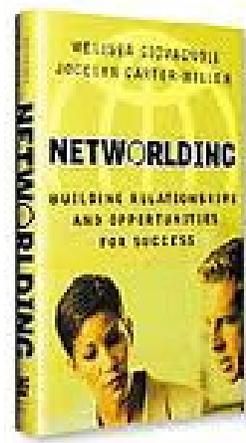
and N. Michigan Ave (across Michigan from the Hancock Building).

Our speaker is Melissa G. Wilson, a founder of Networkling, networkling.com, who has devoted over 20 years to coaching people in the art and science of developing networks. She uses the term "networkling" to replace traditional networking and differentiate from it. Networkling is making meaningful connections and leveraging those connections in new and powerful ways.

Wilson has written or co-authored more than dozen books, including *Networking Is Dead*, which was on the *Wall Street Journal's* best seller list. This is not your typical self-help book because she uses three main characters to make her points, and the reader can easily slip into one or

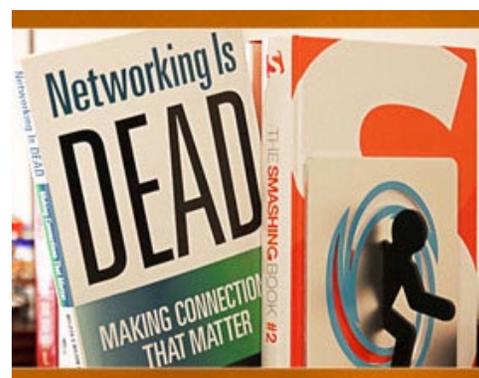
two of the roles. "I believe storytelling to create engagement is alive and well and living in our world of content," says Wilson, who is graciously providing all who attend this program with hardback copies.

Her Networkling program has been licensed to leading corporations and universities such as Yale. What freelance writers will find appealing is that it doesn't add another layer of time and work to what you are doing now; some of us are already overwhelmed by social media. Instead, networkling is about mastering the skills to create a more effective support system of people who can help grow our business.



publish good relationships and build trust. "As professional writers you want to be recognized and sought out as a solution

Wilson is a leading LinkedIn strategist and trainer. She also helps corporate CEOs and others publish books (finding them ghostwriters and editors). In her opinion, this is a boom time for writers who can establish good relationships and build trust. "As professional writers you want to be recognized and sought out as a solution



for this huge boom in content." Wilson has appeared on the Today show, CNN, WGN, CNBC and Fox, and IWOC is delighted to have her. Don't miss this program; it could transform the way you make connections in person and online.

Networking with snacks and beverages begins at 5 p.m., followed by the program at 6:00. The meeting is free to IWOC members. Nonmembers pay \$10 with online pre-registration. Payment is \$15 at the door. (First-time visitors attend for free if they pre-register online.) All attendees are welcome to join IWOC members at a buy-your-own dinner at a nearby restaurant after the meeting. Discounted parking is available at the 900 N. Michigan self-park garage, if you pick up a voucher at the Gratz Center before you pay on the way out. ■

— Stewart Truelsen

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A Contemporary Devil's Dictionary



Language is slippery, ever shifting, ever evolving, ever eluding our feeble attempts to capture it in dictionaries, whether in print or online. But language is not as slippery as many of the people who use it. As Alice learned in *Through the Looking Glass*: "When I use a word, Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less!'"

That is the essence of the wonderful modern usage of the word "spin." Instead of merely meaning the action of a child's top, or the trick by which a baseball, tennis ball, or ping-pong ball is made to curve in the air or turn sharply on bouncing, "spin" now means to take some embarrassing statement or set of facts and turn it around, or even "topsy-turvy" as Alice might say.

In talking to Humpty, Alice evidently forgot the much earlier advice

"I see what I eat" is the same thing as "I eat what I see!"

There is nothing new about people being slippery with language. About 2,500 years ago the Greek Sophists taught rich young noblemen how to succeed in business and politics without really trying, by manipulating citizens through rhetorical sleight of mouth. These techniques have thrived for centuries, but today's "spin doctors" can twist, disguise, or even completely abolish clear words and concepts, substituting phrases that conceal meaning. Public figures, for example, no longer admit they did or said something wrong. Instead of apologizing or retracting, they "walk it back." One former governor, for example, "walked back" his marital infidelity all the way from the Appalachian Trail in the Blue Ridge Mountains to Buenos Aires, and back again to South Carolina. And he is just one of many prominent reverse pedestrians from the fields of politics, religion, and finance.

The following catalogue is far from exhaustive. I leave that to Dr. Johnson. But I have collected specimens of verbal misdirection and think I can identify some distinct species.

The vanishing apology, for example, represents the species *Confessio Pseudoverbulus*, or in layman's language, "I/we goofed, but we don't want to admit it." An excellent specimen is "recalibration," as in "We got our marketing strategy all wrong, so now we have to recalibrate." In these



the March Hare and the Mad Hatter had given her in *Wonderland*: "Then you should say what you mean," the March Hare went on. "I do," Alice hastily replied; "at least I mean what I say, that's the same thing, you know." "Not the same thing a bit!" said the Hatter. "Why, you might just as well say that

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President's Column CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2.

cases, it may even be necessary to “reposition our product line” to “redeploy our resources into market segments that accept higher price points.”

In extreme cases of *Confessio Pseudoverbulus*, someone may suggest, “We’d better circle the wagons.” But some excessively frank person may insist on looking at “the elephant in the room.” The literal translation of this zoological item is, “Oh, s—t! We really screwed up and now we’re buried in a huge pile of elephant poop.” To which some pessimist will shrug and reply in resignation, “It is what it is.” The only correct response to this defeatist attitude is “Let’s take this off-line,” meaning “I want to strangle you, but I’d prefer to do it without witnesses around.”

Another species is the “monetizer.” Monetizing often means to sell nothing for something or charge money for something that used to be free. For example, the air from gas station tire pumps, or, on a vaster scale, the re-routing of free TV signals from the public airwaves to cable channels (which may soon happen to Internet communications). A recent example of mass monetization was the Dot Com Bubble, but the pioneer monetizer was the tailor who made the Emperor’s New Clothes. Another feat of monetization is called “blue-skying,” which means, “I’m selling you something that does not, and may never, exist, but I can make it sound real good.”

Business visionaries who like to monetize tend to take “the 30,000-foot view” of the world, while unimaginative obstructionists insist, “The devil is in the details.” In their

fanatical insistence on details, they may say, “Let’s get granular,” which means looking for that devil who’s lurking in them. This is a less sexy version of Olivia Newton-John’s “Let’s Get Physical” song from *Grease*.

Which brings to mind The Corporate Theory of Human Evolution, according to which human beings evolved from people to employees to staff to personnel to human resources and, at last, to human capital. In contrast,

tal. So let’s pretend we can do the impossible and worry about facts later.”

In order to be “leveraged and deployed for optimal ROI,” human capital must constantly be incentivized. This can be done by developing their core competencies, but sometimes it is necessary to focus on their pain points. It helps to emphasize the key principle that “Less Is More,” which comes in handy when it becomes necessary to reduce salaries and/or

benefits, or even to downsize—or more accurately—rightsize the human capital.

The fiercest linguistic predators are those who use military and sports metaphors to make cubicle drones—upper and middle managers, office workers, and, yes, even top executives—believe (or at least pretend)

that their humdrum working lives are bold and almost heroic. Tough Guy Talk transforms the worlds of business, media, and politics into battlefields and stadiums.

This category partly overlaps with Corporate Evolutionary Theory in the phrase “lean and mean,” which is one of the military metaphors most beloved in corporate suites. It is very useful as a call to “improve the bottom line” by reducing staff and/or budgets, which often “enhances the productivity” of the surviving human capital.

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Fundamentalist Management Theory states, “In the Beginning was the Serf.” One subspecies of human capital is Associates, a term that designates low-level clerical and retail employees (i.e., serfs) and is intended to make them feel better about being underpaid and/or overworked and/or getting no benefits.

These concepts are deeply embedded in Modern Business English. For instance, every business must have goals, so we have Stretch Goals and SMART Goals, both of which mean, “The boss insists we need to sell more, produce more, and make more profit, while reducing costs and human capi-



We Shudda Done Our Homework

Not to mix metaphors, but last month we cried wolf about ID theft, and we're somewhat sheepish about that. Of course it's important to avoid it, but we think we might have overstressed the likelihood of complete catastrophe if it happened. Now that we've delved into it more deeply, we realize that we succumbed to the scare tactics of the ads for paid ID-theft protection.

We also promised an article about free ID-theft prevention. It turns out that getting free credit reports from the agencies, monitoring your bank accounts and credit cards online, avoiding suspicious websites, and common-sense things like not putting anything that scammers could use on social media, e.g., your complete birthdate or your address are just about all you need. To avoid bricks-and-mortar theft, don't put your vacation dates there either. ■

— The editor

SERVICES YOU DON'T NEED OR COULD GET FOR FREE RAMP UP THE BILL

Commercial ID-Theft Protection: It's Not Worth the Cost

You could spend \$120 to \$300 yearly — millions do — to protect yourself from identity theft, but according to *Consumer Reports*, you don't have to. Using DIY methods is just as effective, and they cost little to nothing. Plus, the ID-protection industry itself can be a bit shady. Here's the scoop:

Regulators have slapped fines and other punishments on several big names — including LifeLock and Capital One — for deceptive marketing practices such as failing to disclose that one is automatically enrolled after a "free" trial period and promising to prevent ID theft when they don't actually do that. Some companies also exaggerate the threat. Surveys show that most frauds involve stolen credit cards, not stolen IDs, and federal regs limit that liability, usually to \$50 per account. (Many credit card companies even

waive that.) Add in forged checks and stolen debit cards, and these crimes make up 80 percent of so-called identity theft.

Of course it's catastrophic if someone steals your name, social security number, and other info to open credit accounts, tap your insurance, or file a tax return in your name to get a refund. But less than one percent of households experience this calamity.

Commercial credit monitoring is flawed too. Companies look for fraudulent new accounts on your credit reports, but most alerts turn out to be routine changes *you* have made, e.g., getting a new credit card. Plus, alerts aren't always timely, so if your security *has* been breached, you may not know it for days, weeks, or months.

Here's another thing: most ID-theft outfits offer up to \$1M in insurance,

but they don't pay if your loss is covered by federal consumer protections, homeowners' or renters' insurance, or merchants, one of which is usually the case. In reality, most ID-theft victims have zero out-of-pocket losses, and the few that do averaged \$309 for existing accounts and \$1205 for new account fraud in 2011.

All this having been said, it may give you peace of mind to get alerts when something seems to be going on with your finances. The trouble is, commercial ID-theft prevention includes unnecessary services that you pay big bucks for. If you want alerts, you can buy stand-alone alerts for \$5/month and get a free ID-theft protection risk assessment at myidalerts.com. You can also sign up for free online banking and mobile apps to monitor your checking and credit accounts daily. ■

— Joen Kinnan

Great Online Apps Aptly Described

The April program was all about online tools to streamline your writing and your business. IWOC members Jennifer Lyng Rueff and Betsy Storm traded the microphone back and forth as they presented a breezy survey of where to find these tools and what they do. Despite their condensed talk, the meeting took more than an hour. There was that much to cover.

References, organization, and more

For initial research or to find an elusive factoid, try **Encyclopedia.com**, very basic but with free sources such as the *Columbia Encyclopedia* and *Oxford World Encyclopedia*. **Bartleby.com** focuses on literature and reference works. It has an edition of *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr., *Bartlett's Quotations*, and the U.S. government's *World Factbook*. Grammar Girl (**grammar.quickanddirtytips.com**) has an easy style and many tips about word usage: for example the difference between "affect" and "effect." **Dictionary.com** elucidates the meanings of more than two million words and includes a medical dictionary and a dictionary for children.

A good source of quotations is **Thinkexist.com**. It provides suggestions based on your search terms. While you're gathering information, you need someplace to put it. Dropbox (**dropbox.com**) is a superb tool for keeping yourself organized, Jennifer said. It is online storage space (first 2 GB free) that can be accessed from your desktop computer, laptop, tablet, or smart phone, and it is a convenient way to share large files with clients and avoid e-mailing items back and forth. It is also now integrated with Yahoo! Mail; large files flow through Dropbox instead of choking e-mail systems. Evernote (**evernote.com**)



captures and organizes text, pictures, documents, and other things. You can tag items and search content (with limits on the free service), and it can also be accessed from many devices.

Asana (**asana.com**) is a project management tool. Because it is online, it eliminates the accretion of e-mail messages for project teams. Goals, timelines, and tasks are updated in real time and in one place. Jennifer likes it so much she is now using it to plan a bathroom remodeling project.

TeuxDeux (**teuxdeux.com**) is a way of making to-do lists if you like to-do lists. It is also very close to using pen and paper, Jennifer said. Items you do not accomplish on one day automatically carry over to the next. Although it has been free for some time, the company recently began charging \$3 a month to use it. There is a free app for smart phones.

Providing graphics for a project has an advantage, Betsy said. You have more control over the final product. The disadvantage is that you must find the graphics. Google Images is one place to start, but it has a sometimes confusing mix of free and paid content. **Unprofound.com** was created by a designer who needed photographs. Its content is free, but there are limits on redistribution. Betsy has used istockphoto (**istockphoto.com**) for newsletters. This site charges for images, but her typical cost is \$20 to \$25.

Money: payment and bookkeeping

Once your golden words shine, you want payment. Two billing applications may put a polish on your business and help put gold in your pocket. Jennifer hasn't tested either, but both can provide some automation of tasks. Billing Orchard (**billingorchard.com**) is on the pricey side at \$20 a month, but that sum entitles you to 5,000 transactions. Clients can see billing details; time-tracking is linked to invoicing; and it integrates with QuickBooks. Harvest (**getharvest.com**) is similar but is more affordable, \$12 a month for typical freelance use. An advantage is its expense system. Photograph a receipt, and that information is integrated into your account allowing you to throw away the paper.

To keep an eye on more than billing, Mint (**mint.com**) can put all of your financial information in one place once you provide it with the proper passwords. You can create a budget, track spending, and receive recommendations on planning. Intuit makes it and says it offers bank-level security.

Project visibility: bulletin boards

Although known as a website for personal projects, Pinterest (**pinterest.com**) can be valuable for business, too. The service allows you to create bulletin boards for different topics and add images to them to gather inspirations or explore ideas. Betsy displays her clips, which she scanned as PDFs, and a selection of articles on public relations that other people have pinned on their own boards. Copyright infringement is not an issue because attribution is part of the process of pinning images to your boards, Betsy said.

Social media is the current hot marketing tool but can be a time sucker. To

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Did you know...



Hooray, spring is finally here! Some spring fun facts to enlighten and charm your dinner guests.

Children tend to grow faster in the spring. Scientists have not determined exactly why, but my bet is that a winter of slothful excess followed by rigorous outside play spurs growth hormones.

Spring fever is a real phenomenon, caused by an increase in serotonin (a neurotransmitter responsible for feelings of happiness) and a decrease in melatonin (a hormone responsible for sleepiness), brought about by increased daylight hours. You actually have a legitimate excuse for staring out the window and daydreaming.

Contrary to what you may think, Illinois is not in the top five states with the greatest number of cloudy days. Those states are Alaska, Washington, Vermont, New Hampshire, and West Virginia. The five states reporting the greatest number of clear days are Arizona, California, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah.

Male grizzly bears typically emerge from hibernation in March or April while females wait until late April or May. The males wake up, scratch, and immediately search for food, not unlike their human counterparts.

Most people only use a quarter to a half of the recommended amount of sunscreen. Adults need about one shot glass full. Slathered, not sipped. ■

— Katherine Mikkelson

TECHNOLOGY 101

Bluetooth & Wi-Fi: What's the Dif?

I know you've been tossing and turning every night, unable to sleep because you're totally in the dark as to the difference between Bluetooth and wi-fi. You have, haven't you? Well, fret no more. You'll be the life of the party next time you're out — that is if you're in the company of dweebs and geeks who get all clammy when discussing the latest IEEE specs — as you reel off your newfound knowledge gleaned from this learned article. Ready? Here we go. . .

First, let's dismiss the myth that Bluetooth is a condition caused by eating licorice and forgetting to brush your teeth. Oh, no. Bluetooth and wi-fi are actually kissin' cousins because both use radio waves for wireless communication. The difference between the two stems from what they are designed to do and how they are used. Bluetooth is principally used to connect devices without using cables, e.g., your computer and printer, whereas wi-fi provides high-speed access to the Internet.



Bluetooth is kind of a wimp in that it can only exchange data over distances of less than 30 feet, but within that range, it has lots of applications.

Bluetooth-enabled devices in close proximity could include your computer in all its forms, printer, MP3 player, smartphone, and/or wireless headset. (Bluetooth is what makes it possible

for people to talk hands-free on their cells while driving over a cliff or seemingly roaming the streets babbling to themselves.) Both devices have to have Bluetooth in order to work together, but more and more printers and computers come with this capability, and it's pretty standard on portable devices.

Wi-fi, yet another acronym — this one stands for "wireless fidelity" — is also a wireless standard, but it wirelessly connects devices to the Internet or a local-area network (LAN) rather than to each other. Wi-Fi has a much wider range than Bluetooth since a wi-fi signal can be picked up as far as 300 feet away from a hotspot. Wi-fi hotspots are becoming ubiquitous, however, and if they overlap, one can get a signal from far afield. There may not be hotspots in the Gobi Desert, but I wouldn't bet on it.



If you want to use wi-fi in your home, you need a router, which could open up a whole new can of technology worms, but it won't today. We'll talk about router ramifications another time. Suffice it to say that, among other things, a wi-fi router enables several computers to get on the Internet at the same time. That's handy if you have children who spend the better part of their lives on Facebook, and you'd occasionally like to check your e-mail. A router also allows you to get on the Internet from anywhere in your home unless you've got a room more than 300 feet from the router. (In that case, get the butler to do your Internet surfing for you.)

So that's today's technology lesson, kiddies. Bluetooth wirelessly connects nearby devices; wi-fi wirelessly connects to the Internet. With your hideous state of ignorance resolved, you should be able to sleep like a hibernating bear tonight, but if you have trouble nodding off, just read this article again. That should do the trick. ■

— Joen Kinnan

THIS OS HAS A RADICAL NEW LOOK. IS IT FOR YOU?

Windows 8: Let your Fingers Do the Walking . . . Or Not



Windows 8 arrived with much fanfare (from Microsoft) and lots of boos from disgruntled users mystified by the radical changes in the look. In case you're thinking of upgrading your OS — or buying a new computer — we thought you might like to know what's different.

The first thing you'll notice about W-8 is that the screen mimics the look of a smartphone. It even opens with a lockscreen that you swipe to remove. Yes, this operating system (OS) has all the features of a touchscreen, but your screen has to have that capability. Otherwise, you can click or press a key. Then you must enter a password. That will take you to the new Start screen, which takes the place of the traditional Start menu, now nonexistent.



The Start screen is filled with groups of “tiles” that display apps, pictures, the current weather, whatever you want. Many of these tiles are “dynamic,” that is, they update automatically. For example, the e-mail tile will be current when you select it. If you add more tiles than the screen can display, you scroll sideways — yes, *sideways*, not down, to see the rest. You'll have to get used to that because there's lots of sideways scrolling in W-8.

If you have a touchscreen, you can use your finger to move around, scroll, and pinch to zoom in and out, but if your

screen just stares stupidly back when you touch it, it will behoove you to learn keyboard shortcuts unless you like to watch molasses dripping. (For the sake of brevity, from here on, assume that there's a keyboard and/or mouse way to do everything — there is — even if I don't mention it.)

A new feature in W-8 is the Charm bar. A silly name for what is basically a version of the Control Panel but with fewer options. There are five “charms” on the Charm bar: Search, Share, Start, Devices, and Settings. The Charm bar is always with you on the right-hand side of the screen. (I tried to find out whether you could hide it if you wanted to, but I couldn't find any info on that.)

“Charm bar” isn't the only new gimmick name. Microsoft calls the whole look the “Modern UI Interface.” There's no question that it's very different in its aim as well as the look. W-8 provides Social apps that include Mail, Calendar, Messaging, and People. Fire up any of these apps initially, and you'll be prompted to sign in for the services you already use, including Google, Gmail, Hotmail, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and others.

Once connected, the apps fill up with contact info, calendar appointments, etc. There's some crossover between apps, particularly People and Messaging, but contacts are automatically merged from the various services, so there aren't duplicates. All the Social apps except People show notifications when something new appears, and Microsoft is expected to add People soon.

Clearly, Microsoft doesn't want Jack to be a dull boy. (You know, all work and no play . . .) So they've beefed up the Media apps, but they're now Xbox-

branded, so it feels more like a store than a place to browse and play your own music and videos.

Use SkyDrive to stash your files on your hard drive and in the cloud, and get to them no matter where you are. Your stuff is available on multiple PCs, your phone, and even non-Windows devices with the free SkyDrive app installed on them.

Other apps include maps, stock market stuff, and games. Skype now comes with W-8 too. But there's more in the store! Of course there's a store, and one might callously surmise that the real purpose of the W-8 redesign is to sell additional stuff. A W-8 upgrade for your current PC costs \$120, a W-8 Pro upgrade, \$200, but Microsoft now also sells a touchscreen PC. Plus, there are all those extra apps you can buy.

A word about Internet Explorer 10. It ain't IE9! In the default view, a website appears full-screen, and the address bar and thumbnails only appear when you swipe in from the top or bottom edges. Oddly, the address bar appears on the bottom, not the top. And, of course, Bing is the search engine. You can also use Bing directly from the W-8 interface.

There's much more that's new, and a few things that are gone, including Aero, but this gives you an idea of what W-8 is all about. It hasn't exactly taken the country by storm, partly because it works best if you have a touchscreen, and touchscreen computers are more expensive. Others aren't thrilled with a setup that looks like their smartphone, but as computing devices get smaller and smaller, it may be the wave of the future. If you're shopping for a new PC, though, you can still request W-7 if you want to keep your grimy paws off the screen. ■

— Joen Kinnan

Online Apps Aptly Described Dave's Column

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keep her Twitter account under control Jennifer uses HootSuite (hootsuite.com). It allows her to filter tweets according to various criteria, for example who has mentioned her or who has retweeted one of her items. If you prefer to write all your tweets at one sitting, you can do it and then schedule the times for distribution. The software can also collect feeds from other social media such as LinkedIn.

Online tools can be very valuable, but the meeting ended with a discussion of how reliable and long-lived they may be. Small software makers may fail. Even large ones may end services as Google recently did. How can you be certain your work flow won't be upended by

the loss of some tool you entrusted with your valuable information? The answer lies in recognizing the limits of the technological world. Obsolescence is a reality, perhaps more than in other spheres of life. If you commit to some software solution but worry about its longevity, determine whether your information can be saved in some other format, for example as a PDF or text file. This will allow you to change to another application if your favorite is shut down, or it will allow you to migrate your information to a more suitable application if you find one.

If you want more detail — and there is much more detail — handouts from the meeting and additional information will be on the IWOC website. ■

— David Steinkraus

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And do not forget the “road warriors,” now both female and male. These modern Willy Lomans, have a smile and a shine on their shoes and also on their smartphones and tablet computers. Road warriors always “hit the ground running,” as attested by numerous commercials for motel chains like La Quinta Inns and car rental agencies like National. They are good “team players” who always “step up to the plate.” Their employers boast of their “bench strength” with lots of good reserve players. Sadly, sometimes a company decides, “We got too many middle managers—somebody’s got to go!” The roster is too big and some team players need to be cut. It’s rough on the human capital, but as the saying goes, “When the going gets tough, the tough get...” caught in a “realignment program” or, as we used to say, “fired.”

It’s enough to make George Orwell spin in his grave. ■

SUPPOSE YOU WERE AN IDIOT AND SUPPOSE YOU WERE A MEMBER OF CONGRESS. BUT I REPEAT MYSELF. — MARK TWAIN

In the next issue. . .



- **June IWOC mixer:** We'll mingle with members of the Midwest Publishing Association (formerly Chicago Book Clinic) at The Dog's Bollox (formerly Beckett's Pub) at 3210 N. Lincoln Avenue in Chicago. Save the date, June 11.
- **President's column:** You always learn something interesting in this often surprising column.
- **Helpful tips on software, hardware, and/or just plain biz practices, and much more.**

