

GO Talk

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Corporate rockers: Lady Gaga and her fellow superstars are being offered impressive-sounding day jobs at big companies.

CELEBRITY VP OF GAGA

By Steven Levy

CORPORATIONS ARE NO LONGER JUST ENLISTING CELEBRITIES TO FLOG THEIR PRODUCTS. THEY'RE NOW GIVING THEM FANCY JOB TITLES AND A SAY IN THE PRODUCTION PROCESS.

The first months of 2011 haven't been the greatest for Intel. The semi-conductor giant began the year with the discovery that a new chip installed in thousands of ready-to-ship computers had a serious flaw. Then Nokia decided to scuttle its plan to implement an Intel-based system called MeeGo in favour of a new line of phones built around Microsoft's Windows Phone 7.

But don't cry for Intel. On January 25, the company announced that it had retained the services of a new 'director of creative innovation' — will.i.am. Deborah Conrad, Intel VP and chief marketing officer, handed the Black Eyed Pea his employment badge at an internal sales and marketing convention. "It's imperative that Intel and our innovations are kept in front of the global youth culture that embraces new devices and new forms of communication and entertainment," she said in a press release. On a company blog, one employee speculated that Intel would benefit from will.i.am's belief that, "When you are truly inspired/magic happens/incredible things happen/love happens."

So that's why Intel screwed up the Cougar Point chipsets — not enough love!

As tech companies look to rap artists for their wisdom and insight, this push for something deeper than the standard celebrity endorsement is becoming the rule. The lecture schedule at Google boasts a roster that Conan O'Brien would envy. Katy Perry was a recent guest at Facebook. And Lady Gaga is now a creative director at Polaroid.

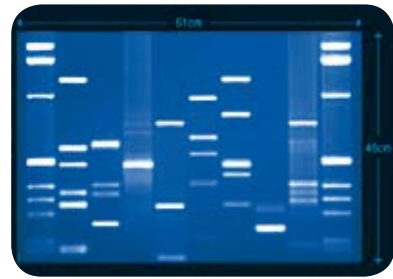
Headphone engineers wrestling with frequency response and acoustic dynamics are apparently starting to draw on the technical and creative feedback of performers like Ludacris, Dr Dre and, again, Lady Gaga. Headphone manufacturer Monster even claims that basketball player LeBron James' input influenced its line of Beats earphones. None of this is new. I remember when Michael Jackson visited Atari in the early '80s, presumably to look for opportunities to turn his creative vision into a videogame. (He later went to Sega, whose Jacko-

inspired *Moonwalker* game became a cult classic.) And in 1997, Apple instituted a program called AppleMasters, soliciting product feedback from a varied group of famous users, including Lauren Bacall, Sinbad and Jennifer Jason Leigh.

But even as will.i.am and Lady Gaga get their new parking spots, there are growing questions about whether the halo of celebrity is being replaced by the imprimatur of those closer to us. A central premise of social networking — and a pillar of a lot of monetisation plans — is the belief that we are more interested in the preferences of our friends and family than the fetishes of the rich and famous. If your friend 'likes' a product on Facebook, it can show up as an endorsement in your News Feed. On a visit to Facebook, you might learn which set of car speakers your cousin Larry recommends. Will this supplant the celebrity model?

Not a chance. No company will ever brag about "bass by cousin Larry". Nor will a chip-maker elevate a civilian, even one with savvy and a big Twitter following, to a formal innovation post. The bet behind the celebrity-executive trend is that, at worst, hiring an icon will garner publicity and make employees feel more excited about their companies. At best, the brands might actually benefit from the creativity and self-promotional flair that made those celebrities famous in the first place. Salespeople and marketers at the event where Intel introduced will.i.am went bananas when their new innovation officer held up a microprocessor and told them how such chips infused his music and changed his life.

If that extra love helps Intel's bottom line, he'll have earned his badge. ☞



Genomic philanthropy: After discovering he had a 20-80 per cent chance of developing Parkinson's, Google's Sergey Brin immediately began funding research into that disease.

odds are I'll never develop Type 2 diabetes or multiple sclerosis. My IQ and episodic memory fall into the "typical" range. Although I'm of 99 per cent European extraction, my mother's people belong to Haplogroup J, which arose in the Middle East 45,000 – 50,000 years ago. On my dad's side I'm Haplogroup R1b1b2a1a2f, which most likely formed in Turkey about 20,000 years ago during the last Ice Age.

How do I know all this? Did I subject myself to weeks of medical testing and spend countless hours researching my genealogy? Well, no. I spat into a vial, mailed it off for testing, then logged on to a website a month later to have the mysteries of my genetic code laid bare.

In 2003, the three billion DNA letters in the human genome were sequenced. Five years later, by which time the cost of testing had dropped to a mass-marketable level, Anne Wojcicki, wife of Google co-founder Sergey Brin, pioneered 'retail genomics', launching a company called 23andMe (named for the 23 pairs of chromosomes in a normal human cell). In 2008, for US\$399, 23andMe customers could have 600,000 of their genetic markers identified, thus obtaining estimates of their predisposition to 90 traits and conditions, ranging from baldness to blindness.

Soon enough, other 'personal genomics' companies, including an Australian outfit, Lumigenix, sprung up offering similar tests.

Romain Bonjean, CEO of Lumigenix, says he's had only a few hundred customers — mainly well-heeled professionals with a pre-existing interest in genetics — since he launched his company in January but believes he's getting in on the ground floor of something huge.

"The genotyping and sequencing market was worth \$500 million last year. It's predicted to be worth \$15 billion in 2014," he says. "It now costs about \$14,000 to sequence an individual's entire genome. Some say that within five years it will be \$100. Once that happens, *everyone* will be sequenced. Today's testing is like the first Apple Mac — it's cool but it's about to get a lot cooler. Mass testing has the potential to obliterate recessive genetic diseases like cystic fibrosis."

GENOMICS TESTING TIMES

By Nigel Bowen

IF THE EXPERTS ARE RIGHT, WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WE'LL ALL KNOW OUR GENETIC MAKE-UP. BUT ARE WE READY FOR THE TRUTH OF WHO WE REALLY ARE?

If it's not too much information, there are a few things I'd like to share. I'm at greater than normal risk of developing several bowel-related diseases, of going bald and of having one or both of my balls lopped off. On the bright side, I have only an average chance of getting lung, prostate or colon cancer and the

"Everyone in the genetics field has been surprised at how quickly the field has moved and how slowly the uptake has followed," says renowned geneticist Professor Bob Williamson. "But testing is literally getting cheaper by the month and everyone is interested in things passed down through families; everyone wants to avoid having a child with a serious disease."

So can we really start breeding out diseases?

"We already have."

What?

"In the '70s, in Cyprus, everyone had to be tested to see if they were a carrier of a severe hereditary anemia called Thalassaemia. If they were, they were strongly discouraged from marrying another carrier and, if they did, they were pushed to have prenatal testing. Thalassaemia was eliminated within a generation."

As soon as a market in what was labelled 'recreational genomics' emerged, politicians and regulators were all over it, outlawing employers and insurance companies from engaging in

genetic discrimination and casting a generally disapproving eye over the industry. In Australia, the Therapeutic Goods Administration is keeping a close watch on the industry and operators such as Lumigenix are treading carefully. "Though we could, we are not testing for diseases, such as early onset Alzheimer's, some breast cancer markers or Huntington's disease, where your genotype gives you a near certainty of getting that disease," Lumigenix CEO Romain Bonjean says.

"That's significant, life-changing information and should involve genetic counselling. Our focus is on more common diseases that have environmental influence, that you can take steps to prevent."

That's an approach Professor Bob Williamson has little time for. "I can't understand why people wouldn't be given information about Alzheimer's. Ninety per cent of them will discover that they have a very low risk of developing it. The 10 per cent who are at high risk can delay its onset by staying physically and mentally active, as well as make choices about things such as drawing up a living will."

The issue of what diseases people should be

told they are likely to develop is just the tip of the double helix when it comes to the ethical issues that will be thrown up when DNA testing takes off. There are one million healthy carriers of the recessive gene for cystic fibrosis in Australia. Should they be "strongly discouraged" from having children with each other? If they choose to do so, do they still have the right to expect the rest of the community to fund their child's care if it has cystic fibrosis? Is it then only a matter of time until men and women start comparing DNA data on first dates and ruling out those who are insufficiently genetically blessed?

The ancestry aspect of these tests comes fraught with its own dilemmas. For example, what happens to a person's sense of identity when they discover their clan's history is a fairytale? "Every ethnic group thinks it's more pure than it is," observes Professor Williamson. "When you look into any family history, you always find there's some Portuguese seaman or

African slave who somehow got into the family and left their genetic trademark behind."

In the TV series *Faces of America*, which aired on SBS earlier this year, *Desperate Housewives'* Eva Longoria, who identifies as Mexican-American, discovered she was 70 per cent European, 27 per cent Asian and 3 per cent African and that she shares an ancestor with Chinese-American cellist Yo-Yo Ma. (Oprah Winfrey, having once proclaimed she was descended from Zulus, was reportedly devastated when DNA testing proved she wasn't.)

So how long until an enterprising uni student discovers

he has Aboriginal heritage and argues he should be entitled to Abstudy? What happens when someone finds out they're part of a race they consider inferior? We'll find out soon enough, but Professor Williamson is sanguine. "People can maintain their culture while recognising their genetic heritage is much broader than the single culture they identify with."

As for me, after a month of fantasising about the possibility of having an exotic great-grandparent or predisposition to a fascinating medical condition, I found the results of my own test — that I was as white bread as I'd feared and could look forward to nothing more exciting than testicular cancer — a tad anti-climactic.

"Ninety-five per cent of the time, the test isn't going to turn up anything significant," Professor Williamson consoles me. "But if you are one of the five per cent that's affected by a severe genetic disease, or a disease that's partly genetic, getting that information in time to do something about it will be one of the most important things that will ever happen to you." ☞



DNA TESTING IN THE REAL WORLD IS A LOT LESS GLAMOROUS THAN ON COP SHOWS. AFTER ABSTAINING FROM EATING, DRINKING AND SMOKING FOR 30 MINUTES, YOU FILL A VIAL WITH SALIVA.

"TODAY'S TESTING IS LIKE THE FIRST APPLE MAC. IT'S COOL BUT IT'S ABOUT TO GET A LOT COOLER."

SEX

QUID PRO FELLATIO

By Kelly Oxford

WANT TO TAKE THE SEX IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO NEW HEIGHTS? THEN IT'S TIME TO PUT SEXUAL FAVOURS ON THE TABLE AND START NEGOTIATING.

In the beginning, every serious romantic entanglement is an electric, superconducting, steamy, fleshy hump festival. New sex partner = new sex, and new sex = lots of sex. That's sex maths. You're in the kitchen making pasta sauce — bam! — you're having sex on the floor. You're parking the car in the garage — bam! — you're having sex in the car. But inevitably, invariably, it wears off. Soon all your conversations, once so filled with erotic promise, are about bills and barfy kids and how that swollen knee makes your leg look like Zach Galifianakis'.

Then, one night, she's sitting next to you on the couch when she turns to you and says, "Man, I really want a Slurpee." Meaning, of course: "Will you go to the 7-Eleven and get me a Slurpee?" But by now you're way past the white knight stage of the relationship, so you don't budge. And then it occurs to her. "Will you get me a Slurpee if I give you a blow job?"

And everything goes silent for a moment. Then she raises her eyebrows and does that blowie-pantomime thing with her tongue inside her cheek. The one she hasn't done since, oh, month four of the relationship. With a single gesture, an arousing new world has busted open. You are — let's face it — whoring, but with a safe, committed partner. In no time, you're trading tricks for trips to the dry-cleaner. You're making dinner for the kids and later that night you're coming twice.

The negotiation process quickly becomes its own thrill. But know the terrain, boys. Example: your woman proposes that you pick up a box of ice-cream sandwiches, a copy of *Vogue Australia* and a bottle of OPI nail lacquer (in Pink-A-Doodle colour) in exchange for a three-position sex session. Analysis: that's not a good deal. Renegotiate. For that price, she'll also put on those thigh-high stockings. And trust me, this is fun for her, too. A gentle spanking in exchange for taking out the garbage during a rainstorm? A brief experimentation with a ball gag for two weeks of laundry? All this can be yours.

Sex bartering has been a part of my married life for so long that it's hard to believe there are couples who haven't thought of this yet. Now ▶

Negotiating hard: Striking sex deals is lots more fun than arguing about the housework.



when I see a father at the water park with three young children and no mother in sight, I no longer think, 'What a cool dad' or 'How sad — widowed so young.' Instead I think, 'That guy's getting fucked for hours tonight.' One of the biggest 'deals' my husband and I ever 'closed' was over a handbag that I wanted after our second child turned mine into a paint canvas. Among other things, I agreed to a Brazilian wax. Yes, I could've just bought the bag and skipped the wax. But what the hell fun is that?

There are ground rules. Number one: only agree to sex acts that you're both actually interested in trying. If she doesn't really want to do the reverse cowgirl, dangling a tub of French vanilla ice-cream is not cool. Resentment will creep in. Number two: no reneging. Back-outs are the first sign that your 'deals' are no longer in kinky air quotes, that the whole game has turned bloodless and one-sided.

Sexual heat in a marriage is a funny thing; sometimes it roars back when you least expect it. Last month my man and I were out to dinner, and the waitress flirted with him shamelessly. Watching her eye-grope him recharged my libido. Our deal later that night was simple and unspoken: he could have whatever he wanted, and all he had to do in exchange was spend the rest of his life with me. ☺

SEX SHRINK GOING HARDCORE

By Rebecca Newman

**BITING, BOOSTER-SEATING
AND BUNGA BUNGA
BACCHANALS — IT'S A WHOLE
NEW, AHM, BALL GAME
FOR MODERN LOVERS
WITH AN OPEN MIND.**

• Is the 'booster seat' a position worth trying?

LG, by email

First up, let me warn you off the booster seat if your abs lack strength, or your aerobic capacity is more Jack Black than Matt Damon. It's an intense, deep position, a real Goliath experience, but you've got to be strong and you've got to be fast (in your movements, at least), preferably fresh from the fight...

If you think you're equal to the booster seat — an advanced variant on standing rear entry — make the

whole evening a performance. Meet in a sleek bar — we're talking martinis, low light — with you looking the part in an exquisitely tailored suit.

On the way home, slide your hand up her stocking tops in the cab, placing her hand on your trousers so she knows just how excited you are. Unlock the door and, before you turn the lights on, lift her round your waist.

'Ah,' she thinks, 'I know what's coming.' But she doesn't.

Carry her over to the sofa, put her down and turn her round so that she faces the wall with her feet on the cushions. Take off her coat. Lift her skirt. By now she should be aroused, wet, so unfasten your fly — but instead of taking her doggy, lift her hips towards you until her legs are in a right angle in front of her (imagine she's sitting in a chair; that is how she will be, only there is no chair — you will be supporting her), and at the same time as you thrust, you lift her up and down on your cock.

The unusual angle affords deliciously satisfying penetration, with the length of your shaft connecting stratospherically with her G-spot. More than that, though, the primeval feeling of your holding her will send her to the stars. Lucky girl.

• My darling likes to be bitten. Any tips?

JO, by email

For a technique so readily available to every lover, biting as an erotic manoeuvre is not given the attention it so richly deserves.

The Kama Sutra lists eight different styles of biting, articulating details such as the number of teeth to be used, the pressure, which part of the body is most suitable for each kind of bite, and the type of marks that will be left on your lover's skin.

Explore her reaction to gentle nips, such as the 'swollen bite', when both your upper and lower teeth are exerting pressure, and the 'point', when you press with only two teeth — both recommended to be tried on the lower lip.

Or to stronger bites, where you chew with your teeth and your lips, which are known as the 'line of jewels' for the marks you will leave, which work well on the small of her back and the throat. The text also encourages her to respond — harder — to your overtures: "When a man bites a woman forcibly, she should angrily do the same to him with double force..." Sounds like fun, no?

• After Silvio Berlusconi's antics, are orgies now a little passé?

JB, by email

It would be a brave or foolish man who chose to emulate the dye-jobbed Italian premier's predilection for *bunga bunga* (a phrase, by the way, that has unhappy roots in sexual assault and cannibalism, if some etymologies are to be believed). That's not to say that orgies are over altogether, but Berlusconi's activities have left organised group activity hung with a tawdry air. Easy and open relationships, with one or several lovers, are far more fashionable.

On which note, a new vibrator from Lelo is

singularly well suited to situations involving multiple partners, where you are concentrating on several kinds of pleasure all at once. The Isla vibe from Lelo's new Insignia range has a smooth silicone finish, and its motors produce a series of well-measured vibration patterns (\$199, lelo.com). It is shaped like an elongated apostrophe. A hole is bored through the fatter end, so no matter how much lube you use, how much she comes, how much your mind (or body) is engaged in other things, you can continue to grasp it while you thrust. The shape makes a surprisingly large difference to the ease with which you can rotate the toy, or use it to press against her G-spot. Definitely worth consideration.



The Italian rapscallion: Even at 74, Silvio Berlusconi's appetite for *bunga bunga* hasn't flagged.

• **I'm interested by *The Kama Sutra*, but editions are either god-awfully illustrated and full of oblique references to jade caves, or so abridged the text is castrated. Can you recommend a passable copy?**

MR, by email

While *The Kama Sutra* is the ultimate sexual handbook, its innate magnificence has been twisted and defiled by a potpourri generation of softly lit erotic manuals. Of the many out there, Richard Emerson's recently published *The New Kama Sutra* (Carlton Books, \$25) presents a decent distillation of the original text.

Among the positions it describes, it rightly recommends 'the bow', aka the 'widely opened position', on which I'll take a moment to elaborate.

You kneel on the floor. She straddles you, with her feet on the floor – and perhaps pauses to make the most of what is already a glorious position (known as 'Asian showgirl').

She then leans back until her head and shoulders are touching the bed. Supporting herself on her feet and shoulders, she rocks forwards and back. You simply watch and enjoy.

If she has let her yoga class slip, she might rest the small of her back on a stack of pillows. You might also recreate the same bow-shaped bend in her back by having her lie on the bed with her shoulders and head tilted off the side; you mount her in missionary, holding her hips tight so you don't both end up sliding to the ground.

In this last position, since you'll have your hands full you may also wish to add clitoral stimulation in the shape of a Lelo Tor vibrating cock ring (\$149, lelo.com). [GQ](#)

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CULTURE WE'RE ALL CURATORS NOW

By Simon Dumenco

TIME-POOR ENTHUSIASTS WANT YOUR GUIDANCE. SO BECOME A CULTURAL MAGNET AND BUILD YOUR PERSONAL BRAND.

Around the turn of the millennium, it seemed like every other person you met was a DJ. Now 'curator' is the job du jour — even for DJs, like Mark Ronson, who 'curated' a music show on British television back in February. The term is everywhere. Hipster bands such as Belle & Sebastian and the Flaming Lips have 'curated' the annual All Tomorrow's Parties music festivals in the UK and the US. Closer to home, music impresario Stephen Pavlovic of Modular People is 'curating' this year's Vivid LIVE festival at the Sydney Opera House, from May 27 to June 5. And on Twitter, Kanye West recently declared: "If I had to be defined at this point I'll take the title of an inventor or maybe curator."

All this self-aggrandisement might seem a flagrant distortion of a profession that the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as "the officer in charge of a museum, gallery of art, library, or the like". And in fact many traditionalists are unhappy with this etymological hijack. Last spring, in a post titled *You Are Not a Curator*, a blogger at the British arts journal *newcurator.com* sniffed, "Anyone calling themselves a 'curator' when it is clear that they are dealing in

merchandise should have their thumbs removed... you have not reached some cultural apex through the range of shoes you have on offer."

Maybe not, but there are plenty of benefits for those who excel at this kind of curation. Dave Brown discovered the power of picking when Holiday Matinee, his "blog for creative inspiration" (music, movies, design, travel), led to consulting gigs with MTV, W Hotels and Ford. His 'personal brand' became associated with discernment, imparting him with a much-sought-after sort of expertise.

"The web democratised the ability to spot things," explains Josh Spear, who launched his influential design-and-culture blog, *JoshSpear.com*, after realising "that curated consumption was a kind of business, because of the sheer quantity of decisions people have to make around buying things". He later parlayed his curatorial acumen into the launch of Undercurrent, a New York digital-strategy firm with clients like GE and Pepsi.

You could argue that we need this emerging class of finders and choosers now more than ever, because we're living in a world where everyone has become a creator. Consider the 24 hours of video uploaded to YouTube each minute or the endless supply of niche products available to consumers. "Nobody revels in being overwhelmed," says Steven Rosenbaum, author of the new book *Curation Nation: How to Win in a World Where Consumers Are Creators*. "And so we start looking for people who say, 'This thing you're interested in? I will curate it for you.' We're like, 'OK, you're my new best friend.'" Excel at selecting exactly who and what to pay attention to, and soon everyone will be paying attention to you.

And, as Brown's and Spear's trajectories make clear, there can be other rewards. "For people who get good at this early," says Rosenbaum, "I think there will be more and more economic payback." [GQ](#)



Curating cool: establish yourself as an expert and you could have a whole new career.