How Southern Fried Science (sort of) conquered (a small subset) of the (online ocean science) world

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Focus on Narrative
How to brew beer in a coffee maker, using only materials commonly found on a modestly sized oceanographic research vessel.

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by Andrew David Thaler

Introduction

Beer brewing is as much an art as a science. Finding the right blend of delicate grains, hops, malt, adding just the right flavoring agents, boiling for exactly enough time to release the tannins, starches, humic acids from you wort, these are all skills that take a lifetime to master. Perfect beer is meticulously planned...
10 ways drones can save the ocean

Over the last few months, I’ve been digging into the confusing tangle of laws that protect marine mammals and regulate the use of drones—small, semi-autonomous vehicles used by both researchers and hobbyists to observe whales and other marine mammals. You can check out the outcome of my findings over at Motherboard, where I just published *Drones Would Revolutionize Oceanic Conservation, If They Weren’t Illegal*. The quick and dirt summary is that there is no legal way to fly drones near whales, at the moment, but there are ways to do it responsibly while we work to catch regulations up with technology.
Layout is an integral component of effective blogging.
How to build a canoe from scratch on a graduate student stipend

For the last week, my Twitter feed (@sfriedscientist) has been overrun with pictures of half built canoes. Well, we finally finished the boat, so here is Bluegrass Blue Crab and the Southern Fried Scientist’s guide to building a plywood canoe on a graduate student budget.

If you live near the water, or want to live near the water, or just want people to think you live near the water, you
28 fallacies about the Fukushima nuclear disaster’s effect on the US West Coast

The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant is back in the news, with recent reports of continued leaks. Coming on the heels of these new reports is a viral blog post entitled 28 Signs That The West Coast Is Being Absolutely Fried With Nuclear Radiation From Fukushima. The article is a paranoid, poorly reasoned attempt to link the tragedy of the Fukushima disaster to just about every environmental issue facing the US west coast in the last few months. At its best, it’s an illogical piece of post-modern absurdism. At its worst, its empirically false and intentionally misleading, rife with out-of-context quotes and cherry-picked data. The author had 28 chances to make a single reasonable point, and every single one rang hollow.
The Trouble with Teacup Pigs

I adore *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo*. That’s right, I said it. There’s a soft spot in my brittle old heart for that whole family, Sugar Bear, Mamma June, and all. Especially Glitzy.

**Glitzy**, for those of you who don’t know, is a “Teacup” Pig (as you can tell from the video, pigs don’t like to be held). Pigs are cute. Piglets are super cute. Pigs are very intelligent, highly social, and make surprisingly good, house-trainable pets. Unfortunately, 800-lb hogs are not cute. Over the years, various breeders have tried to create pigs that retain all of the adorableness of a piglet without reaching the potential half ton plus mass of a full grown adult hog. Among the
No, we didn’t find the Loch Ness Monster with Apple Maps

It’s been a long time since we’ve had a good debunking-random-monster-sighting post. The ready availability of global satellite image databases is a powerful tool for exploration and monitoring but has also led to a boom in pseudoscience “discoveries” by people not familiar with how these images are produced or just willing to suspend disbelief for their pet woo.

This morning my inbox exploded with articles about the definitive Loch Ness monster sighting. The accompanying image is a low-resolution satellite image of a boat wake, available, apparently, only on Apple Maps. There’s really no deconstruction needed, it’s a boat wake. Compare this image from Loch Ness:
Mermaids: The New Evidence is a Fake Documentary

Last year, David and several other marine science bloggers debunked Animal Planet’s amazingly fraudulent mermaid foc-u-mentary (yes, I’m coining that term for fake documentaries that show absolute disdain for their audience. It’s not satire. It’s not parody. It’s a giant middle finger to the public). No need to retread old ground—read the original coverage:

- Mermaids do not exist, and five other important things people should, but do not, know about the ocean
- RIP: Science on TV
- Mermaids Embodies the Rotting Carcass of Science TV
One-fifth of all known hydrothermal vents are threatened by deep-sea mining
Why conserve deep-sea hydrothermal vents?

Of all the questions I am asked as a deep-sea biologist, the hardest to answer is “why conserve deep-sea hydrothermal vents?” Sure there are the classic canards of economics (vents produce valuable minerals) and biotechnology.

Whenever you are writing about science for an audience that is not exclusively your scientific peers (and often, even if you are), you are an activist.
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Marine Science and Conservation
Mercenary, Deep-sea Ecologist,
Population Geneticist. The deep sea is
Earth’s last great wilderness. I sail with
@Upwell.

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Q: When did you become an exploding
whale expert? A: I read it in an article about
me. I assume they check their facts.
#IAMTHEZISSOU
Expect Surprises
What it Would Really Be Like to be Aquaman

Andrew Thaler - Southern Fried Science
Filed to: BIOLOGY   7/19/12 3:27pm
Googly eyes change everything
Whales, dolphins, manatees, seals, sea lions, sea otters, walruses, and polar bears are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Drones must maintain a safe distance and avoid altering the animals' behavior.
Angler gives up world record to release massive shark alive

Scranton attorney Michael Roth has been fishing since 1959, and has traveled around the world to pursue his hobby. “Fishing simply takes me to amazing places,” he told me, “from Alaska to Panama to the Eastern Caribbean.” In January, Roth went on a fishing trip to the Turks and Caicos. While targeting sharks off Provo, he saw a huge blacktip shark cruise by and threw a red and orange fly in its path.

Photo courtesy Michael Roth

Sharks + Optimism = Fame
Discussion, Dissent, and Trolling
1. People emotionally invested in discrediting specific concepts
2. Managed personas
3. Honest dissenters

You can rarely tell which is which.

"...allows for one operator to anonymously create and control up to ten personas from one computer. Each persona has a background, history, supporting details, and cyber presence that is consistent from a technical, cultural, and geographic standpoint."
The Big Picture
Potential Reach vs. Depth of Content