

Posterity, The Internet, Ferrets And Me

Alexandra Sargent-Colburn gets a glimpse at how her writings on the Internet about ferrets may shape how she is remembered for posterity.

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The infamous orange devil dino squeaky toy, seen here with another squeaky toy, first brought joy to ferrets, and now it's bringing joy to a Weimaraner.

How will you be remembered? For your achievements in your chosen profession, for your dedication to your local community or church, for the role you play in your family? Will you receive public recognition for your successes or, as is generally the case, will your achievements only be relevant to a small circle of friends and family?

We live in an age unlike any other. Never before has it been possible for us to communicate with such ease and precision across the face of the world. Technology allows us to share ideas and information in a manner that existed only in the realm of science fiction a few generations back.

This is truly the Information Age. So much of what we do on a daily basis is on record whether we realize it or not. Our spending habits, patterns of travel and our favored entertainments; it's all in a database somewhere. Further, many of us share the details of our daily lives freely with the world at large in the form of social networking websites. The very concept of privacy is evolving daily.

What do you think you would find if you Googled yourself? You might be surprised.

The Search Wasn't For Ferrets

I was certainly surprised to learn how a particular lady found me, among six billion human beings, using a computer word search. Did she type in "ferrets" or anything related to ferrets? I'd guess that I'd be firmly associated with ferrets in the World Wide Web after a decade of writing about them here and there in cyberspace.

The lady who found me, however, did not own a ferret nor did she Google the word "ferret" nor any part of my name, nor any of the details that one might reasonably expect to find in a resume. Instead, she typed in these four words: "orange devil dino squeaky." I am the first reference to come up when Googled in this manner, the first of seventeen thousand references dredged up by those four keywords typed in that order.

My name comes up in association with a column I wrote for Ferrets Magazine in 2008 about using squeaky toys to call ferrets to me. At the time I had two squeaky toys — one was the orange devil dino and the other was a pale blue-green sea monster. My column featured a nice color picture of the two side by side.

Now, let's think about this for a minute. How will I be remembered, long after I am gone? For my achievements, meager as they may be? For some funny stories about ferrets? Noooooo. I will go down in history in association with the words "orange devil dino squeaky." And, fortunately for me, I find that just desperately funny!

A Dog In Need

The lady I mentioned has a dog, a Weimaraner named Maverick. Maverick disdains all toys with one notable exception — his beloved orange devil dino squeaky, one identical to the toy I described in my column long ago. Apparently he loved his little horned orange dino to bits. And that, unfortunately, is how his little horned orange dino wound up — in bits. I understand a lawn mower was involved, and Maverick was utterly despondent. His lady was left to search the Internet for a replacement, hoping for a miracle. Finally she typed in those four words, and my name popped up heading my ferret column, complete with the picture.

Well, the lady got in touch with the editor of Ferrets Magazine, and my editor passed the message on to me. Maverick was in trouble. He needed a new orange devil dino squeaky, and he needed it right away. Did I remember where I had purchased mine?

Alas, no. I had no idea. But I did have a few stamps! I scrubbed my little horned fellow as best as I could, and slipped him



into a padded mailing envelope. Several days later I found a message in my computer inbox. Package received, Maverick is back to being himself again. I imagine one of those soulful-looking Weimaraners squeaking away for all that he is worth, and the image does my heart good.

Is there a moral to this story? Maybe yes, maybe no. I would like to believe that time and posterity will be kind to me. I would like to think that in a hundred years, long after I am gone, the words "orange devil dino squeaky" will bring up my long-forgotten name in a web search; not the words "author," "ferret mom," "noted enthusiast" — nothing weighty or pretentious. I want to be remembered with a laugh, with an improbability, with a double-take.

And as Maverick could tell you if he spit out the orange, rubber-horned doohickey for a moment, I am well on the way to achieving my ambition!

To see all Secret Lives Of Ferret Owners columns, [click here](#)>>

Alexandra Sargent-Colburn lives in Massachusetts with fish, ferrets, a cat, a husband and a neurotic dog. The ferrets are in charge.