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Synergy and Smut: The Brand in Official and Unofficial *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* Communities of Interest

(1) Tee-shirts. Posters. Teen magazines. Soundtrack CDs. The television marketer's saddlebag is full of cross-promotional consumables, all aimed at building loyalty to the brand of the show. This is hardly a new phenomenon; children in the 1950s wore Davy Crockett coonskin caps and carried Howdy Doody lunchboxes. Indeed, in *Hollywood Planet: Global Media and the Competitive Advantage of Narrative Transparency*, Scott R. Olsen writes that the features in a media product which lead to cross-promotion—or *synergy*—are required to ensure competitive advantage in the global market place.

(2) Copyright holders are notoriously protective of their intellectual property.[1] With the growth of the Internet, it is not surprising that shows are trying to use website chat, email lists, and the like for cross-promotional, brand-building opportunities. If fans want a place to discuss the brand, who better to provide a community space than the brand owner? With that logic in mind, many shows have provided threaded discussion lists (either via email or web bulletin board) and chat capabilities on their official websites. The official communities of interest provide frequent hosted chats with actors and writers from the shows, post a wealth of photographs and plot summaries, and have legitimacy on their side.

(3) What is surprising, however, is how non-affiliated persons are using the same Internet technologies to participate in unofficial—yet still branded—communities of interest. This phenomenon is revealed by examining two communities of interest for the television series *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, one official, The Bronze, once found at http://www.buffy.com [Editors' note: buffy.com officially closed in July 2001 with the move of *Buffy* from the WB to UPN], and one unofficial, The Codex, found at http://www.planetx.com/buffy/. Comparing the methods of discourse employed at each site, the topics discussed, and the apparent norms of each community shows how each community strengthens the competitive advantage of the show, even when the discussion seems subversive and dangerous to family-oriented—or, at least, advertiser-driven—producers.

(4) Comparing communities of interest is tricky business. Though one can make generalized guesses about the participants, it is difficult without a survey device to determine solid demographic information. Appearances are all one has to rely on. The Bronze participants appear to be younger, use more "net speak," and post more frequently. The Codex participants seem to be older, have more education, and "lurk" more often. Going beyond these surface comparisons, however, we can look to some basic structural concerns that help define the communities of interest on Buffy.com and PlanetX.com.

(5) Buffy.com, for example, had two different structured environments available to fans: a linear posting board and a threaded posting board. If you visualize a straight line and try to extrapolate from that image a concept of how a linear posting board might work, you'd most likely think that one person started a discussion, and all posts after that follow somehow from there. This is misleading, however. Perhaps a better mental image would be to picture a row of discrete dots. Each post was separate, and though users can carry on discussions with other users through the posts, or pick up on themes that have developed, nothing structurally encourages this. In fact, the linear posting board was one of the most free-formed web spaces; there aren't subject lines to define a post, there's no expectation that there will be a conversational flow. It's the Speaker's Corner of Buffy.com; everyone had a soapbox, everyone can speak, and even the loud or the witty aren't guaranteed audience. The freedom of this structure appeals to many users, and helps them express their identity within the Buffy brand.

(6) Adding subject level organization makes it easier for posters to find debate or discussion of interest to them, and helps them broadcast their thoughts clearly to others. Users change subject lines to reflect actual content on both Buffy.com's threaded posting board and PlanetX. The board computer programming arranges responses chronologically after initial posts, nesting responses-to-responses chronologically under responses, and so on. Like so many things relating to the web world, these changes are easier to represent visually. Below, the initial post subject line is shown left; justified, follow-up posts and their altered subject lines are indented:

27/01/101 07:58:03
tara has demon connections?
    27/01/101 07:58:34
    Re: tara has demon connections?
    27/01/101 07:59:37
    Taras "Secret"
    27/01/101 08:04:19
    also on Taras "Secret"
        27/01/101 08:13:40
        Re: Taras[2]

In just under one and a half hours, there were 56 posts on the threaded posting board among three posters. On the fifteenth round, the subject line was changed from "Mon Dieu," to "pourquois pas?" reflecting a subtle shift in the

thread. Threaded conversations provide order to users, much like real-time conversational turn taking, making it easier for users to see how their posts fit in to the Buffy community.

(7) The threading feature is a familiar function of the computer code and savvy users who know to respond to a message, rather than start a new thread. There are non-code-related structures of discourse, however, which need to be considered. If one were to print out copies of posts from either of the Buffy.com boards and place them next to copies of PlanetX.com posts, one would first notice the difference in length between the posts. Salutations to 248 people notwithstanding, posters on Buffy.com write short, fragmented posts.

> Hopper says: I was just watching a new episode of Buffy over here in N.Ireland. Spike was trying to have his chip removed, and at the end he had a dream that he loved Buffy, I just thought that it was brilliant! I laughed so hard I nearly Split! I just have to commend the wirters for that nice twist, Thanks[3]

The short posts are easy to scan in the linear posting board; more individual posts are seen without having to scroll the browser window. Since Buffy.com participants were concerned about their voice being heard and recognized, small, easily digestible blurbs help them engage with their community. For the threaded posting board, long posts were discouraged due to a purported size limit to the threads. If you have a particularly long post, people will ask you to cut it in half—and post it in two pieces.[4] This in no way limits the size of the thread; it just makes posts shorter and choppier. Long posts were easier to ignore.

(8) PlanetXers, on the other hand, write volumes. In a 24 January 2001 posting, rusalka writes:

> The Watcher's council is back, as bossy and annoying as ever. After the disappointment of "Triangle," it was great to see an episode where the characters actually behaved in character, Willow was back to her normal likeable self (though I still hate her new hair), Buffy behaved like a strong, self-confident adult, and all the jokes were actually funny. Humor on Buffy always works better when it's treated as a side effect of the situation rather than the central purpose, and it worked very well here. The scenes where Buffy's friends awkwardly attempt to make her look good to the Council were really funny. Not exactly original, but funny nevertheless, and the humor acutally flowed naturally from long-established characterizations. I loved the bit with Willow and Tara brazenly declaring their love only to discover they were answering the wrong question. Anya's desperate attempts to assert her humanity were amusing and oddly endearing. Spike flirting with the Watcher who did her thesis on him was a hoot too, though that scene really didn't make any sense (more on that later).[5]

(9) Twenty-two paragraphs of similar length later, she concludes her post. The sheer long-winded densities of information in the posts more than makes up for the fact that there are fewer posts to the list; it is highly concentrated, if not high-volume. Since there are fewer posts in any given time period, there is less chance that a long post will simply be ignored. However, there are also fewer people to respond to the discussion. PlanetXers pride themselves on building intellectual debates, “picking nits” in episodes and each other’s posts. If a posting lacks a reference to an episode or a character or a theological/philosophical position, it lacks the structure that makes it a PlanetX posting.

(10) For the most part, discussion of episodes, characters, and actors are primary topics on both officially sanctioned and non-sanctioned Buffy boards. Such discussion is the boards’ primary purpose; talking about the product with other product supporters reinforces allegiance to the product. Ancillary topics help us determine the secondary purposes of the boards: to reinforce allegiance to the community of product users. There are surprising differences between Buffy.com and PlanetX.com when it comes to ancillary topics, however.

(11) On Buffy.com, there were frequent “Hi, I’m …” postings, which are not found on PlanetX.com. The completing phrase could be anything from “bored,” to “wanting to chat,” to “back from the dead.” The posts had nothing to do with Buffy, and often, had no relation to previous postings.

> urban_angel says: No comments, really [6]
> Bigsis2 says: Anyone wanna chat?[7]
> darla says: salut[8]

Also unique to Buffy.com are comments on the perceived status of the boards.

> Kiba Rika says: …*doing the slow board dance*[9]
> Ant's Mailbox says: *ping*[10]
> Algerina says: Good morning. I scrolled a bit and it seems as if everyone has poofed and the board is dead… [11]

These posts continually validated the posters’ presence in the community, even when they have nothing on-topic to contribute. With a high-volume board, if you’re not talking, you’re not remembered. The lower-volume PlanetX lists don’t need these verbal fidgets to call attention to the individual.

(12) Not all of the off-topic postings on Buffy.com draw attention solely to the poster. A common topic for the linear posting board is a group greeting, wherein the poster says hello to one or more fellow posters.

> Beldin says: Hi, David's Chick.[12]
> David's Chick says: …BuBBle *big hugs backatcha* …Hello Juggie, *hugs* Long time no speak :) hello Greeneyes, Tana, Beldin valmicheal et al[13]

One frequent poster, greeneyes, said hello to more than 248 people by name in one post.[14] Beyond wondering how greeneyes is able to keep track of 248 posters individually, it is interesting to consider how one gets included in the select list. The off-topic naming posts help build the community, giving it an identifiable structure, a who's-who of the Buffy.com board.

(13) Off-topic topics are a vital part of PlanetX.com's Buffy boards, too. However, there are no greetings, no list status queries, no who's who posts. Instead, the PlanetX off-topics tend to relate to other science fiction and fantasy television shows or books, or comments on society as a whole. Usually, the posters do try to include a reference to Buffy products. noomahn began a thread comparing "Angel" to Laurell K. Hamilton's "Anita Blake, Vampire Hunter" book series. After the thread developed into a serious Anita Blake thread, noomahn brought it all back to Buffy:

> > > > Angel is starting to remind me of Anita Blake from Laurell Hamilton's series.
> > >Only without all the sex, torture, were-beasts and stuffed penguins. :p
> Well, Wesley gets the sex with the bleached blonde and Virginia, Darla and Drucilla get to torture, Oz was the were-beast and the stuffed penguins? I kind of remembered a few butlers that looked like penguins in Blood Money and some in Holland's basement. Now, if we were talking about Buffy, our vampire slayer, I leave all that to your imagination of where to find all that stuff . : .)[15]

(14) The "big picture" goal of off-topic posting may be the same on both sites—to expand the sense of community—but on PlanetX, the more immediate goal appears to be displaying intellectual agility and prowess. Participants play off of each other's posts, trying to lead subjects further afield or bring disparate topics back to the Buffy brand in a creative, interesting way. "Hi, I'm X, and I'm bored," wouldn't pass muster on PlanetX; it doesn't fit with the board's community reinforcing goals.

(15) Boundaries between categories of online community features are difficult to pin down. Indeed, both the structure of the discourse and the topics discussed could be discussed as part of a larger category of concern, *norms*. According to Lawrence Lessig, norms are "a set of understandings [which] constrain behavior…through the threat of *ex post* sanctions imposed by a community."[16] Buffy.com's posting boards spell out some of the community norms in "Newbie Information" pages, splash screens which precede posting areas, and frequent posts from staff members reiterating the proper way to behave in the community space. These information sources also spell out the way you can expect to be treated if you don't behave properly.

(16) Code was used by Buffy.com to enforce some of the norms of the community. Though Lessig separates code into a separate regulating force in his schema, for Buffy.com the code-as-architecture was most interesting when viewed as a tool of norms; "[The code] constrains some behavior by making other behavior possible, or impossible. The code embeds certain values or makes certain values impossible." Buffy.com strived to have a PG-13 community, in keeping with the WB's televised warning that the show is for teens and older viewers. Hence, swearing was out, hate language was out; indeed, most of life's less attractive things were out.

> Swearing is prohibited. There is a language filter in place that will automatically edit some words. Also, regarding the filter, there are some words that are edited that are not cuss words. Base becomes b-ase to prevent editing the base font and the exclamation ACKKKK! will become 'Love all Races' because KKK is filtered out.[17]

The filters are not intelligent. They can not determine difference between discussion of debased thoughts and a change in base font, nor can they recognize a frustrated scream as anything other than a racist group's call letters. Thankfully code-backed norms are the exception on the boards; most norms are enforced by the community itself.

(17) Some of the norms for Buffy.com are common to most online communities. Posters are asked to refrain from posting in all caps, abusing others, or asking basic questions addressed in the frequently asked questions page. The price for going against these norms? "You will be ignored."[18] This virtual shunning was punishment indeed; if people ignore you, you are not a part of the community.

(18) In television-related online communities, however, people sometimes need to know when to ignore you. Time zones, international boundaries, and VCRs all speak to the fact that not every Buffy fan will see every Buffy episode at the exact same time. Discussion of episodes could, therefore, spoil the episode for others. Both of Buffy.com's boards, therefore, request the use of "spoilers" whenever a post refers to a recent or upcoming episode. Though the actual definitions of how a spoiler should be formatted differ, the basics are similar:

> SPOILER BELOW
> 5
> 4
> 3
> 2
> 1
> This is what happens in tomorrow's episode
> 1

2
3
4
5
SPOILER ABOVE

In theory, the five lines of almost-blank space will keep people from accidentally exposure to information they don't want to know yet. This also protects the revenue stream for the Buffy brand holders; if a person knows the upcoming developments in an episode, they might not tune in. If they don't tune in, viewer-based advertiser rates go down. In practice, few posters on either of Buffy.com's boards adhere stringently to the stated norm. They abbreviate the spoiler space, or reply to spoilers without additional spoiler warnings. People who post blatant spoilers without warnings do get flamed, but never ignored.

(19) PlanetX.com does not employ any code-based norms enforcement. It does, however, use spoiler warnings, with far greater frequency than Buffy.com, and greater creativity. Some posters will number down, as on Buffy.com, or simply have five vertical asterixes. Often, however, they include poetry and lyrics to indicate spoiler space.

His
shadow
it
falls
wherever
he
stands,
stacks
of
green
paper
in
his
red
right
hand

Buffy (both the character and the show) is on an upswing this week, but… [19]

(20) PlanetXers are much more conscious of the spoilers, and will continue using them long after it would be safe to assume that all the posters have seen the episode. They self-police, making sure topics and the way they are presented fit in with the PlanetX Buffy community. Pat Moss, founder of PlanetX, said it this way: "No rules, except that the header describe the content (i.e. NC-17, bd/sm, mmf etc) and that multi-part posts are limited to Friday for the volume."[20]

(21) NC-17? Bondage and domination? Sadism and masochism? Three-way action? This is not your Buffy.com Buffy brand.

(22) Or is it? Does smut contribute positively to the Buffy brand?

(23) Buffy, as a show, does not shy away from sexual topics and content. Though all of the main teenage characters on the show were virgins in Season 1, none are now. In fact, each has had more than one sexual partner, and one has started a same-sex partnership.[21] Sex and sexuality is handled in a PG way, to protect the prime-time audience and the revenue stream; people may watch pornos, but the advertisers want to capture whole families watching at the same time…not your usual porn demographic. It makes intuitive sense that the restraint shown with depictions of sexual content on the show would carry over to the official communities of interest. If "going too far" on the screen could compromise the brand, how is the web any different?

(24) The simplistic answer is, "It just *is*." The early days of television were filled with squeaky-clean variety shows and gentle situation comedies. The early days of the networked globe were filled with alt.sex.stories and the promise of anonymous downloads of reams of pornography. Denying the powerful draw of the net as a safe place to explore your various levels of kink and those of others is unwise. Stories written by fans—*fanfic*—helps the fans feel connected to the characters and the brand in the same way that board discussions do. Fanfic allows participants to play with the characters and situations, and become part of the fantasy. Often, this involves raunchy sexual scenes—smut. One PlanetXer wrestled with the determination of smut in her own fanfic:

> I've written 2 stories that had fairly graphic m/f sex scenes in them but I rated them hard R because they were basically just one scene in stories with over 50 pages and they weren't as graphic as some stuff I've read. Plus for one of them I wrote an alternate, non-graphic ending so people who'd read the rest of the story and didn't want to read the sex scene could finish it. I don't know if that counts as smut fanfic or not.[22]

(25) Indeed, smut fanfic is distinguishable from other fanfic only by the explicit sexual descriptions. There is growing academic interest in slash fiction, those fanfics which pair characters' names with a "/" to denote sexual activity in the upcoming story. Most of the research has dealt with *Star Trek* characters, the most popular being K/S, or

Kirk-slash-Spock. These slash fictions are present for almost every television show, however. Even the Japanese cult hit cooking show *Iron Chef* has had slash sites dedicated to its characters.[23] There is an audience for this type of story. As the brand holders will not produce these stories for public consumption, fans will.

(26) PlanetX.com has a list specifically for Buffy slash, or smut. Though there are no posted rules for the standard board, the community understands that anything with explicit sexual content should be posted to the smut board instead. In addition, everyone posting to the smut board is obliged to start their message with "This list is rated NC-17," even if the posting following has no NC-17 content. The presence of the slash pairings does let the savvy reader know that it refers to a lot of varied sexual situations, even before they reach the word "orgy."

> The Buffy and Mom story I wrote, Chalice of Venus, was my first post onto the Buffy smut page, back in Fall 1998 (i think...). I accidentally reposted it a few months back (it is saved on hotmail). I'm glad there is an interest in it. The series also features Willow/Xander (part 2) Willow/Buffy (part 3), another Buffy/Joyce (part 4) and a rollicking orgy with Joyce/Giles/Faith(it was set in Season Three)/Buffy in Part 5.[24]

The post did begin with a list disclaimer. At first glance, it would appear that this was a code-enforced norm; a listserv or posting board could easily append every post with a set phrase. However, posts with absolutely no sexual content, explicit or implied, do not carry the disclaimer. It is a community-enforced norm.

(27) Another community-enforced norm was listed by Moss as the only rule: the headers must describe the content.[25] Posters utilize the same playfulness that they do on the standard PlanetX board within the confines of the norm, however, as seen in the table below:

This list is rated NC-17. This list is rated NC-17. The Danes call it quality! Title- The Chalice of Venus Part 3 By-The Occupant Email-joccupant@xxxx[26] Characters-Buffy, Willow, Giles. Type- Lesbian Parings-Buffy/Willow Disclaimer- All characters are owned by Joss Whedon and Warner Bros. They'll never do this on the show. But I can dream, can't I?[27]	This list is rated NC-17. This list is Rated NC-17. What are you doing here, Junior? Title- The Chalice of Venus Part 4 By- The Occupant Email- joccupant@xxxx Characters- Buffy, Joyce Type- Lesbian incest, costume play Pairings- Buffy/Joyce Disclaimer- All characters are owned by that Joss guy. None of the actresses would enact this story. I've asked.
This list is rated NC-17. This list is rated NC-17. Smut does not promote tooth decay. Title- The Chalice of Venus part 5 By- The Occupant Email- joccupant@xxxx Characters- Buffy, Joyce, Faith, Giles, some vampires and introducing Deimos and Kurt. Type- masturbation, lesbian sex, incest, straight sex, group sex Pairings- Buffy/Faith, Buffy/Joyce, Buffy/Joyce/Giles/Faith, Joyce/Giles. Disclaimer- All characters, with the exception of Deimos and Kurt, are property of Joss Whedon. Deimos and Kurt are mine. You can use them if you wish, but don't kill them. That's reserved for me.	This list is rated NC-17. This story is rated NC-17- the new symbol of quality!!!! Title- The Chalice of Venus Part 2 By- The Occupant Email- joccupant@xxxx Characters- Buffy, Giles, Willow and Xander Type- M/F Pairings- Willow/Xander Rating NC-17 Disclaimer- all characters owned by Joss Whedon. Believe me: Smutty fan fics are the pinnacle of praise for a show!

The brand holders are protected by the NC-17 warnings and the disclaimer tag lines. The reader is warned in advance of content they might find objectionable—if a new reader was unclear about the relationship between Buffy and Joyce, the "incest" label tells all. The poster is able to display wit and humor by altering the potentially dry legalese with asides. Truthfully, smut does not promote tooth decay…so how bad could it be? The interplay between poster and audience involves a lot of verbal nudging and winking.

(28) Smut and porn, like romance novels and pulp detective fiction, is generally formulaic. Character names in one story could be replaced with names from another story, and scenes could be lifted wholesale; Janeway/Seven (from *Star Trek: Voyager*) is not very different from Buffy/Willow when the lights are off. The difference in Trek slash and Buffy smut lies solely in the characters and plots surrounding the sex. The difference is the brand. Star Trek has a much older and more lucrative brand identity than Buffy. It has survived web-based smut stories with no damage to that brand. There is no reason to think that Buffy—or any other brand—would suffer; there is every expectation that the smut feeds a portion of the Buffy consumer audience not fully satisfied by other branded outlets. If some Buffy

fans are going to read smut anyway, the availability of Buffy smut can only enforce the brand. The brand holders can not produce these stories for public consumption; they should encourage—or at least, not hinder—the smut production by fans. There is no loss to the brand as long as the textual poaching takes place in an unofficial, yet still branded, environment.

(29) Smut. Porn. Incest. The very mention of these seems subversive and dangerous to family-oriented producers. Would Taco Bell or Baby Ruth want to spend $100,000 to advertise on a show that peddled synergistic smut? The odds are slim. It is in the brand-holder's best interests to utilize Internet technologies to provide advertiser-friendly community building sites to build brand synergy without risking revenue streams. There is also a market for branded smut, however. The same Internet technologies employed by the branded communities to forge synergy can be used by non-affiliated groups with equal success and increased overall competitive advantage for the brand. The structures of discourse, topics discussed, and apparent norms of both Buffy.com and PlanetX.com build strong branded communities. Strong branded communities then strengthen the competitive advantage of the show. In order to exploit all possible fan loyalty and receive the full benefits of synergy, the brand-owners should gently police their official sites for propriety while allowing even the smuttiest unofficial community-building utilizing their brand to continue. If "any publicity is good publicity", so any community is good community.[28]

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[1] Paramount's crackdown on *Star Trek* fan sites is the most widely cited. Letters like the one posted at http://www.vidiot.com/images/viacomletter.gif effectively shut down many vibrant fan community sites. *Harry Potter* sites are the most recent targets of copyright crackdowns.

[2] Spelling anomalies, punctuation choices and 'net speak' appearing in the posts have been retained throughout this paper. Threaded posting board (TPB), http://www.buffy.com.

[3] Citations from electronic sources will include the identifying date, time, and IP [Internet posting] stamp, formatted as they appear online. Though daunting to scan in a reference, it is the only unique identification provided. Linear posting board (LPB), http://www.buffy.com, Sat Jan 27 07:54:04 2001 62.254.32.4.

[4] TPB, "Newbie Info," http://www.buffy.com.

[5] rusalka, Buffy list, PlanetX.com (BLP), Wed, 24 Jan 2001 21:06:29 -0500 (PST).

[6] LPB, http://www.buffy.com, Sat Jan 27 07:53:09 2001 195.92.67.88.

[7] Http://www.buffy.com, Sat Jan 27 04:18:54 2001 213.40.131.65.

[8] Http://www.buffy.com, Sat Jan 27 06:22:43 2001 24.202.214.22.

[9] Http://www.buffy.com, Sat Jan 27 07:42:22 2001 65.80.204.61.

[10] A computer term; one pings a site to see if there is any response. Http://www.buffy.com, Sat Jan 27 04:40:30 2001 212.67.99.23.

[11] Http://www.buffy.com, Sat Jan 27 05:23:43 2001 205.188.195.38.

[12] Http://www.buffy.com, Sat Jan 27 08:21:38 2001 63.151.0.128.

[13] Http://www.buffy.com, Sat Jan 27 07:42:12 2001 213.123.17.70.

[14] Http://www.buffy.com, Sat Jan 27 05:33:05 2001 209.186.12.34.

[15] The angled brackets at the beginning of this passage indicate portions of previous emails, being referenced in the current post. noomahn, BLP, "OT: Anita Blake and Angel (Was Re: Codex: LONG: Thoughts on "Blood Money")," Fri, 26 Jan 2001 20:04:07 -0800 (PST).

[16] Lessig, Lawrence, *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace*, Basic Books, New York: 1999. pg. 89.

[17] TPB, "Newbie Info," http://www.buffy.com.

[18] LPB, http://www.buffy.com/slow/index_bronze.html.

[19] rusalka, BLP, Wed, 24 Jan 2001 21:09:30 –0500 (PST). Lyric from "Red Right Hand," Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds, *Let Love In,* Mute – A.D.A. 1994.

[20] Email interview, 28 January 2001.

[21] With far less of the media hoopla surrounding same-sex partnerships on *Ellen*, *Friends*, or *Will and Grace*.

[22] Email interview, Lady RHood, 28 January 2001.

[23] Kelly Boyd, "Slashing Across the Universe: Slash, Science Fiction, and Textual Poaching." presentation at Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association annual meeting, 21 April 2000, New Orleans, LA.

[24] J.D. Occupant, Buffy Smut list, PlanetX.com (BSP) 01/03/2001 12:45:43 PM (PST)

[25] Email interview, 28 January 2001.

[26] I have stripped out the identifying domain name to protect the anonymity of the poster throughout this table.

[27] J.D. Occupant, BSP, multiple posts, 4 January 2001.

[28] Special thanks to Nicholas A. J. Stengel for providing input and editing services throughout the paper's progress, Kelly C. C. Redwine, who acted as a sounding board, and countless friends and associates who were convinced that a "Buffy Porn" paper had merits.