

Last Friday, Denton gave me, along with a few other New York digital-media types, a preview of his new commenting system; yesterday, I had a pretty geeky conversation with Wert about how he intends to turn it into dollars.

At Gawker, as at most other popular sites, the number of people reading the comments is vastly greater than the number of people writing them. But the way they're presented, they're not easy to read, there's far too many of them, and the signal-to-noise ratio tends to be extremely low.

So Gawker's new commenting system is based around threads, with the default view being the main, most interesting thread. It's possible to click through to other threads, and every thread — indeed, every comment — has its own unique URL; what's more, the person who starts a thread has quite a lot of control over which comments in that thread will get featured.

What that means is that if an advertiser buys a sponsored post — and sponsored posts have been part of Gawker's menu of offerings for some time now — then once the new commenting system is in place, the advertiser will have a reasonably large degree of control of the conversation that most people see in that post.

Denton's vision for Gawker Media's editorial product is very much moving towards comments and away from posts, and he reckons that advertisers will follow him in that direction if he blazes the trail. Expect Gawker's blog posts to get shorter, in future, and sometimes just be a headline, at least in the first instance, so that the conversation can get going before a pretty post can be put together. And if Denton's scheme goes according to plan, when you follow a link to a Gawker website, it will often — or maybe even usually — be a link to a comment, rather than to an original post. Eventually, it's possible to envisage a world where the distinction between the two is erased completely.

This is a very ambitious vision. Historically, Gawker has been pretty weak with respect to technological innovations, and so it's reasonable to take an 'I'll believe it when I see it' approach

academe art autos **banking** Basel III
bikes charts cities climate change commodities
counterparties credit cards crime davos
default **economics** emerging markets
employment ETFs ethics **euro** Felix TV
governance greece housing imf
leadership M&A markets **media** munis
philanthropy private equity publishing
regulation risk **sovereign debt**
stocks technocrats technology trading
travel video **wine** world bank

ARCHIVES

September 2012

August 2012

July 2012

June 2012

May 2012

April 2012

March 2012

February 2012

January 2012

December 2011

November 2011