

whatever happened to Analog X?

AnalogX is run by Mark Thompson. For a couple of years he's produced shareware to rival commercial product. Proxy is a simple, internet sharing utility that is stable, easy to use and free. That led me to find the AnalogX site and weekly mailing list.

For a longth stretch (12 months and more) it was a weekly newsletter that was filled with info on new and forthcoming software, developments with AnalogX: The Band and other interesting topics.

In August of 2000, it all seemed to stop. It took time to realise that the weekly mailout hadn't happened in a while. AnalogX kind of went missing for awhile.

In the meantime, a few system rebuilds later and numerous trips to the site to grab utilities, it occurred to me that something.... odd may have happened. AnalogX may be gone forever.

Maybe I should archive the software, just in case?

I sent off an email instead. Mark had already spoken to me in July of last year, so I thought he might want a chat about what he's been up to of late.

Sure enough, AnalogX is alive and well.

I'd like to start by asking about your work on display at www.analogx.com. You had been keeping a strong release schedule well up to about August of last year. Then suddenly, nothing. What happened to your AnalogX plans?



In some ways, they're still on track - in others, the train has pretty much derailed... :) I didn't intend for there to be as big a gap as there has been, but I didn't set out to make a huge free software/music site either - of course, in the time I've been 'gone', I have continued to work on releases for AnalogX, I just haven't made any yet.

I've also been working on other sites which will be part of the 'AnalogX Network' of sites; an example of one would be www.PrePal.com, a very cool site where you can find out the average price for used musical equipment, which is updated daily... I also have been in the process of revamping my music studio, which has also taken a big chunk of my time, but will definitely be worth it. Thanks to quite a bit of help from the guys at Emu-Ensoniq, things are pretty jamming in there now, and I look forward writing music again as well.

Sounds involved. Will the AnalogX network see you collaborating or remaining to work solo?

I don't currently have plans to include anything into the 'AnalogX Network' that isn't actually done by me - it's more to confuse people more than they already are... Some people think AnalogX is a program, some think it's a band, some think it's a software development company, and still others think it's a person; now they can add a network to the list!

Your mailing list used to be weekly with only the occasional quiet week. The same

applied to your software releases. I know that by running your own website, programming and creating music, the time consumed by AnalogX would have been a hefty chunk of your week. Is [AnalogX](#) as we knew it gone?

hehe, not in the slightest! I've almost relaunched the site a few times since August, but I wanted to make sure that I would be able to keep it going with the same momentum it's had in the past. I also am going to be focusing more on releasing larger (more feature full) apps, such as the FTP client I'll be relaunching the site with. I really miss the pace and excitement of AnalogX, so I won't be able to hold out for much longer...

Where exactly have the last five months or so taken you?

Mostly to San Diego, Ca. :) I'm actually now an employee of a company (www.aerocast.com, you can see me on the executive staff), which is a big step for me since I've been doing contract work for the last 10 years.



Now before you think this might have something to do with the slowdown at [AnalogX](#), let me belay those concerns by saying that I was working for the same company as a contractor for more than a year before that infamous day in August. Of course, it does take a large portion of my time, but we're working on some very cool technology, with some of the best people I've had the opportunity to work with, so I wasn't willing to pass the opportunity up. :)

Last time I'd spoken to you, you mentioned that an aim was to make the [AnalogX](#) site one of the top 1,000 sites on the internet. I remember from a posting of yours around a year ago that you had made the [Alexa](#) top 10,000. A two part question arises then. One, do you still have an interest in being in the top 1,000 and two, has your traffic altered much during your quiet period?

Very good questions! I'm still gunning for the top 1000, and surprisingly things haven't altered too much from when I stopped actively working on the site. In August, I was right around 9,000 while now I've slipped to around 13,000 - but at the same time, I'm actually getting more traffic now to the site than ever! How can this be? Simple, while my site is still growing, I'm no longer growing at a pace faster than the Internet itself (which is what is necessary to move up in the ranking)...

Another interesting aspect is that another site I use as a kind of bellwether (because it is someone similar to mine, and has similar traffic patterns) has slipped more than I have, even though he has been active during the same time period.

Another nice aspect is that the ListServer Legion (my weekly email list) has grown substantially since we last spoke - it broke 300,000 a week ago, so I'm really looking forward to seeing what kind of response I get when I send out the "I'm back" email.

Your music was also an essential ingredient in making [AnalogX](#) what it is. How has it been going?

As I mentioned earlier, my studio has been in the rebuilding phase for the last 5 months or so, which has limited my ability to write music. The worst part is that I upgraded all my computers, and now I can't get the music program I used to use to work - it's actually the DOS-based version of Cakewalk from 1991, so I guess it was inevitable that it would happen. So what am I going to do? Easy, I'll just write a sequencer! It's actually not going to be as difficult as it might sound, I'm not planning on writing a sequencer that is like any of the current ones out there, it's going to be totally new and different...

Since I last spoke to you, the Internet as Industry has faced a major period of downsizing. Any thoughts on this?

So much for my get rich quick plans - wait a minute, I've been running [AnalogX](#) for 3 years now, so I guess it wasn't much of a get rich quick plan anyway! :) I think that the downturn was really a long time in coming, and I think ultimately it will be good for the industry, while a bit painful for the moment. I think it will cause people to be a bit more creative in finding

ways to make money, while at the same time the thinning of the ranks makes it much easier to be seen. My only real concern is that this change doesn't stifle the creativity and energy that the Internet has had - but I don't think that it will. I actually considered making a joke press release stating that AnalogX has laid off 70% of it's workforce, for a strategic refocus. Anyone who knew about the site (and knew that it was only me) would probably haven't gotten a kick out of it.



free.software.music.information.technology

Still getting as much email?

Too much - more than 1,300 or so a day - it's probably been the most difficult part of operating the site. I used to answer every email I received, but those days have long since gone (unfortunately, because I really did enjoy it). Another program I wrote during my absence is a free message board program, very similar to UBB, except I geared it towards generating static content (for lower server load). I'll be putting it up on the site and forwarding people to it instead of email for questions, so that hopefully I can get some sort of user community going to help eachother (and me) out. You can check out a site that's been testing it for a while at www.gameslah.com.

Making any good music-industry connections?

Definitely! Because of the site I've gotten much more visibility than I've ever had before, in music, in software, etc. The music industry is much more fun than the other though, since people tend to come up with more ideas and then they take something I wrote and use it in some totally new and unexpected way - I love that.

How much of your software/music/internet activities has been covered in traditional print and visual media?

Actually quite a bit; AnalogX has been covered to a greater or lesser degree in more than 20 magazines to far; from Business Week to Keyboard to Computer Shopper. This month it's the 'Righteous Link' in MaximumPC, for those interested... :)

Would you ever wish to make a living through your AnalogX persona and activities?

Of course, but I don't want to change the idea behind it. I could easily make a living by simply changing all the software to shareware, but I don't think it would be as exciting and fun for me if that happened.

The software community is most grateful but why have you resisted the temptation to user-pay software?

I'm not really sure, but I'd like to think that in the long run I'll have more of a positive impact as well as having more fun if I continue to keep things free. When things are free, it doesn't really matter if I make a program that only 10 people like, or one that 10 million people like; I make the same amount either way. While I don't have anything against commercial or shareware software, I personally like free software better, so I might as well make something I would want to use to...

Is the "mostly for free" internet dead?

The first wave of the free internet is definitely dead, but I don't think that it will ever be completely dead - the Internet is just too big. The problem is that way back in the day when modems first started showing up and people called around to BBS's, there was a ton of free software you could grab; then, as BBS'ing become more and more popular, the free software slowly represented a smaller and smaller portion of everything out there.

The same is true with the Internet, but not just with software, but also with business models. The last couple years were crazy, and some of the lamest business ideas based

around the free model actually got funding, which made everything very lopsided on the net. Ultimately I think it is going to level out at more freely available 'things' than were available than before the Internet, but less that we have come to expect from the early days.

Finally... what was the last thing that made you laugh?

<http://www.planetstarsiege.com/allyourbase/>

Some talented people who own Photoshop and a variety of music programs have far too much free time... :)



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