

Brian is a master of the eloquent silence that allows many Booknotes authors go on until they reveal the speciousness of their own arguments. But books are a one-way medium, that passive interview technique is not adequate for the Internet; no amount of slack will cause site operators to hang themselves. Case in point: the "Dream Candidate" site that "morphs" from Clinton to Dole depending on poll answers. Brian got them to show how they further trivialize the election, but he would have had to ask to find out if they compile poll results with account nos. and sell the database to mail/phone lists. They may also add a code to indicate which "hits" came through the C-SPAN hyperlink, allowing them to merge C-SPAN viewer traits with the poll to further target "prospects". You can't ask an author if Borders puts my VISA no. with book UPC's and sells my reading tastes, but you can ask site operators if they are data collectors, and for whom. Does someone spend money to fund "Dream Candidate" to entertain us? Why?

P.S. A CNBC interview mentioned that virtually all products bought over the Net are by people supposedly "working" at the time THEY WERE ACTUALLY "SHOPPING" ON-LINE.

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