**Why are teenagers obessed with zombies and vampire?**

Our current preoccupation with zombies and vampires is easy to explain. They're two sides of the same coin, addressing our fascination with sex, death and food. They're both undead, they both feed on us, they both pass on some kind of plague and they can both be killed with specialist techniques – a stake through the heart or a disembraining. But they seem to have become polarised. Vampires are the undead of choice for girls, and zombies for boys. Vampires are cool, aloof, beautiful, brooding creatures of the night. Typical moody teenage boys, basically. Zombies are dumb, brutal, ugly and mindlessly violent. Which makes them also like typical teenage boys, I suppose.

Zombie stories are life lessons for boys who don't mind thinking about bodies, but can't cope with emotions. Vampire stories are in many ways sex for the squeamish. We don't need Raj Persaud to tell us that plunging canines into soft warm necks, or driving stakes between heaving bosoms, are very basic sexual metaphors.

There are now even whole sections of bookshops given over to the new genre of "supernatural romance". Maybe it was ever thus. Dr Polidori, who wrote the very first vampire novel, The Vampyr, based his central character very much on his chief patient, Lord Byron, and the Byronic "mad, bad and dangerous to know" archetype has been at the centre of both romantic and blood-sucking fiction ever since. Dracula, Heathcliffe, Rochester, Darcy and not to mention chief vampire Bill in Channel 4's new series True Blood are all cut from the same cloth. Meyer even claims that she based her first Twilight book on Pride and Prejudice, although Robert Pattinson, who plays the lead in the movie version, looks like James Dean in Rebel Without A Cause. Either way, vampire = sexy rebel.

No zombie is ever going to be a pinup on some young girl's wall. Just as Pattinson and all the Darcy-alikes will never find space on any teenage boy's bedroom walls – every inch will be plastered with revolting posters of zombies. There are no levels of Freudian undertone to zombies. Like boys, they're not subtle. There's nothing sexual about them, and nothing sexy either.

10 Neat Facts About Google Posted by Alex in Blog & Internet, Neatorama Only on November 3, 2009 at 3:44 am

Sure, everybody knows that Google was created by Stanford Ph.D. students Larry Page and Sergey Brin who became gazillionaires. But did you know that Google's first storage device was cobbled together with LEGO? Or that Google's first investor wrote a $100,000 check even before the company officially existed? Or that it has its own 「official」 Google dog?

Neatorama presents the Top 10 Neat Facts About Google:  
1. Before Google, There Was BackRub  
In 1996, graduate students Larry Page and Sergey Brin worked on a research project to understand the link structure of the World Wide Web. They're particularly interested in determining the importance of a given web page based on its backlinks or how many other web pages link to it (which later became the concept behind Google's 「PageRank」 algorithm). The project was named BackRub (yes, a play on the word 「backlink」).

8) Your logo is upside down: Why is the light source obviously below the image? It looks quite unnatural...

The logo is simply a scan of my hand, from a flatbed scanner converted to black and white. The "back" in the picture is the scanner cover, and the shadows are from the scanner light.

**2. The Original Google Computer Storage**

Larry and Sergey needed large amount of disk space to test their PageRank algo, but the largest hard disks available at the time were only 4 GB. So they assembled 10 of these drives together.

While he was an undergrad at Michigan University, Larry had built a programmable plotter out of LEGO, so it's only natural that he used the colorful bricks to create [**Google's first computer storage**](http://infolab.stanford.edu/pub/voy/museum/pictures/display/0-4-Google.htm)!

**3. Google's First Investor**

Sun Microsystem co-founder [**Andy Bechtolsheim**](http://www.sun.com/aboutsun/media/ceo/bio.jsp?name=Andy%20Bechtolsheim) knew a good thing when he saw it. After talking to Larry and Sergey about Google for 30 minutes, he whipped out his checkbook and wrote a check for $100,000, made out to "Google, Inc." Problem was, Google, Inc. hasn't existed yet!

Oh, by the way, the Sun in Sun Microsystem stands for "Stanford University Network."

**4. Google Garage**

Talk about getting lucky tenants. In 1998, Susan Wojcicki [**rented her garage to two Stanford students**](http://www.usatoday.com/tech/techinvestor/corporatenews/2007-07-04-google-wojcicki_N.htm) - you know who they are - for $1,700 a month to help out with the mortgage. That turned out to be a life-changing decision for Susan - it got her a key early job at Google which translated to a top executive position later on, introduced a future husband to her younger sister [**Anne**](https://www.23andme.com/about/board/), and created a mini cottage industry for the rest of her family. (Photo: Jack Gruber/USA Today)

In 2006, [**Google bought the house**](http://www.usatoday.com/tech/news/2006-10-02-google-garage_x.htm) which had become a tourist attraction (the busloads of people who show up to take pictures were so annoying that Google decided not to publish the address - though ironically, you can still [**Google Map**](http://local.google.com/local?f=q&hl=en&q=232%2BSanta%2BMargarita%2BAve.,%2BMenlo%2BPark%2BCA&ie=UTF8&om=1&ll=37.458338,-122.163849&spn=0.021121,0.026779&t=h&z=15&layer=c&cbll=37.458338,-122.163849) it.)

**5. Google's First Dog**

Despite the Internet's obsession with cats, dogs rule Google. In 1999, a Leonberger breed named [**Yoshka**](http://leonberger-hunde.org/dogs/yoshka.html) came to work with Google's first VP of Engineering Urs Hölzle and became the [**company's "first" dog**](http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2004/06/yoshkas-weekend-amble.html). (Photo: [**Google Timeline**](http://www.google.com/corporate/timeline/#1999))

If you must know, Leonbergers are big dogs with lionesque mane that look really majestic. They are, however, [**useless as guard dogs**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonberger#Temperament) because they're much too kind and gentle.

**6. Just How Many Servers Does Google Have?**

Good question. Nobody outside the company knows, and Google ain't talkin'. The company's famously secretive when it comes to its data centers (Heck, no one even knows for sure how many data centers the company has!)

For example, The Dalles or "Googleville" data center in a small Oregon town, was [**cloaked in secrecy**](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/14/technology/14search.html):

"No one says the 'G' word," said Diane Sherwood, executive director of the Port of Klickitat, Wash., directly across the river from The Dalles, who is not bound by such agreements. "It's a little bit like He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named in Harry Potter."

Recently, Google Fellow [**Jeff Dean**](http://research.google.com/people/jeff/index.html) gave a revealing talk on large-scale computing systems in which he discussed technical details of a new storage and computation system called Spanner, which is designed for up to [**10 million servers.**](http://www.datacenterknowledge.com/archives/2009/10/20/google-envisions-10-million-servers/) Skynet, anyone?

**7. "Green" Search**

All those hardware must use a lot of electricity (indeed, Googleville data center is calculated to require about 103 megawatts of electricity - enough to power 82,000 homes or a city the size of Tacoma, Washington), but just how much energy do you use when you perform a Google search?

Google calculated that it uses about [**1 kJ (0.0003 kWh) of energy**](http://www.google.com/corporate/green/datacenters/) to answer the average search query. It's so efficient that your PC will likely use more energy in the time it takes to do a Google search.

To offset its electricity consumption, Google even installed 1.6MW solar panels on the rooftops of the Googleplex. A total of 9,212 solar panels generate 4,475 kWh daily, the equivalent of about the amount of electricity used by 1,000 California homes.

**8. Google Trike**

I'm sure you're all familiar with Google Street View and the camera-topped Google Car, but what about all of the interesting places inaccessible to cars? Enter the [**Google Trike**](http://www.google.com/intl/en/press/pressrel/20091016_street_view_trike.html), which started as a project by Daniel Ratner, a Senior Mechanical Engineer on the Street View team:

"I began thinking about building a bicycle-based Street View system after realizing how many interesting places around the world - ranging from historic landmarks to beautiful trails to shopping districts - aren't accessible by car," says Dan. "When I'm riding the trike, so many people come up to me and ask where it's off to next or how they can get imagery of their favorite spot, so I can't wait to see what our users come up with."

Previously on Neatorama: Google Car Pulled Over by the Cops - Now in Google Street View!

**9. I'm Feeling Lucky Costs Google $110 Million a Year**

The "I'm Feeling Lucky" button on Google's homepage takes you straight to the first web page result. Because it bypasses Google's own search result page, where users are shown ads, the button actually costs Google around $110 million a year.

Why keep it? Google Vice President of Search Product and User Experience Marisa Mayer [**said**](http://marketplace.publicradio.org/display/web/2007/11/19/face_of_google/):

You know Larry and Sergey had the view, and I certainly share it, that it's possible just to become too dry, too corporate, too much about making money. And you know what I think is really delightful about Google and about the "I'm Feeling Lucky," is that they remind you that the people here have personality and that they have interests and that there is real people.

**10. Googlebot, Revealed At Last!**

In 2005, Ben Rathbone (then at Google's Hardware Operations) gave us a glimpse of humanity's future. I, for one, welcome our new [**Googlebot overlord**](http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2005/04/i-googlebot.html):

Then I pondered the question: what does Google do? The grossly simplified answer that I came up with is Google connects the world with the Internet.

It all snapped into place: the idea of a robot, connecting a world with the Internet, with wires, that connect to big cabinets of computers. It was not hard then to make the leap to representing the internet as a world, or globe, made up of pages.

**The Ugliest Building That's Fit to Print**

The American Institute of Architects - never a group to remain silent in the face of structures that it deems unattractive - has released an index of the ugliest buildings in New York City, part of the local chapter's annual guide to the city's architecture. And guess who is ugliest this year? Hint: it's the new headquarters of daily broadsheet newspaper.

Elsewhere in the new list are not one but two Donald Trump towers, a light blue T.G.I. Friday's restaurant on Fifth Avenue, a training center for unionized iron workers, a drab Bronx apartment building and the former headquarters of the defunct Bear Stearns.

**Lettie's Wine Rules: Cheese and Vino**

Red wine and cheese is one of those couplings - like country and Western - that's so automatic that few people actually stop to consider if it actually makes sense. Why not, for example, country and Southern, since that's where so much of the music comes from anyway?

And why red wine with cheese when white wine is so much better with it? Although red wine does go well with certain hard cheeses (such as Parmigiano), I find that its tannins often get in the way. White wines work better because they're so much more versatile in style, texture and character. They can be soft and fruity, dry and minerally or sumptuously sweet. They can pair with goat cheese and blue cheese and stinky cheese, too.

But I'm convinced that most people drink red wine with cheese for one simple reason: At the end of the meal, it's what they have in their glass. The other night, I was at a friend's house for dinner and they pulled out some Camembert to polish off the rest of the wine. Though the cheese was lovely, it was pretty much squashed by the Zinfandel, whose assertive flavors and fairly high alcohol practically bullied the poor Camembert straight off the plate.

My solution is simple: I serve my cheese at the start of the meal, accompanied by a glass of white wine - Sauvignon Blanc, Grüner Veltliner or a Riesling. I know it's not chic nor particularly fashionable - it may even be a bit Midwestern, as one guest once said (without even knowing that's where I'm from). But it definitely works as a food and wine pairing. And I'm happy to say I've made a few converts. Like my friend Vonnie (Pennsylvania-born), who likes cheese first, as well - though she added she 'aspires' to having it after a meal. 'I know that it's chic,' she told me, 'but actually I'd rather have a brownie instead.'

**Eating To Live Or Living To Eat?**

Imagine the typical office birthday party. It's after lunch, so everybody is full. Then, in comes a luscious chocolate confection. The sight, the smell -- even the sound of the word 'cake!' -- stimulate the reward-and-pleasure circuits of the brain, activating memory centers and salivary glands as well.

Those reactions quickly drown out the subtle signals from the stomach that are saying, in effect, 'Still digesting down here. Don't send more!' Social cues add pressure and permission to indulge. Soon, everybody is having a slice -- or two.

Scholars have understood the different motives for eating as far back as Socrates, who counseled, 'Thou shouldst eat to live, not live to eat.' But nowadays, scientists are using sophisticated brain-imaging technology to understand how the lure of delicious food can overwhelm the body's built-in mechanism to regulate hunger and fullness, what's called 'hedonic' versus 'homeostatic' eating.

One thing is clear: Obese people react much more hedonistically to sweet, fat-laden food in the pleasure and reward circuits of the brain than healthy-weight people do. Simply seeing pictures of tempting food can light up the pleasure-seeking areas of obese peoples' brains.

Two conferences this week on obesity are each examining aspects of how appetite works in the brain and why some people ignore their built-in fullness signals. Scientists hope that breakthroughs will lead to ways to retrain people's thinking about food or weight-loss drugs that can target certain brain areas.

**Top 10 rental homes in North America**

(Reuters Life!) - Sometimes you want the comforts of home even while you're on holiday and a luxury rental can put you at ease while you're sampling the best of a new city, resort or region.

Travel Web site TripAdvisor (www.tripadvisor.co.uk) has provided its own list of luxury rental homes in North America, ranging from beachside villas to spacious mountainside estates on the slopes. This list is not endorsed by Reuters.

1. 17 Mile Drive at the Lodge, Pebble Beach, California  
Designed as a French château overlooking the Pacific Ocean and famous Pebble Beach Golf Course, heavenly 17 Mile Drive at the Lodge comfortably sleeps 14 within its majestically art-adorned walls. It's also perfect for a gold-plated summer barbeque with open-air patios, bocce ball courts, a water fountain, playground and room on its more than three acres of land designed to host more than 200 guests.

2. MIT PED, Punta de Mita, Mexico  
Called the Casa El Destino, this uber-luxurious rental home sports breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean, the Marieta Islands, and the skyline of Puerto Vallarta. Guests can play chef in its gourmet kitchen, swim in its expansive oceanfront pool, or take in rounds of golf with preferential tee times at outstanding nearby courses.

3. Camelback Vista, Phoenix, Arizona  
Resting high on Camelback Mountain, remarkable Camelback Vista overlooks the beautiful Valley of the Sun and its surrounding red sandstone cliffs. The property boasts a triangular infinity edged pool that spills over in all directions, a spacious outdoor kitchen, theater room, and even a rock climbing wall for the more active traveler.

4. Casa Fryzer, Cabo San Lucas, Mexico  
Complete with an in-house chef and bartender, magnificently equipped Casa Fryzer is a stunning vacation rental overlooking the water in Cabo San Lucas. The property includes a wine cellar, gym, and theater room with surround sound and recliners, and showcases great attention to detail in its exterior design and modern chic interior décor.

5. Aguajito Rd, Carmel, California  
With over 10,000 square feet overlooking the Monterey Peninsula, the majestic Aguajito Rd has plenty of space for travelers to stretch out and relax during their trip. It also features a kitchen designed by a local celebrity chef and has a spacious outdoor kitchen, barbeque and bar area that can accommodate up to 100 guests.