

Why have a personal blog?

Posted on [January 2, 2011](#) by [Rahil](#)

I just needed to write. Anyone can write a book. Maybe there's some skills involved, like fitting wordplay and rhymes into a song's harmony...I just had to make sure I can write.

I don't know what my next career is, or what I'm going to do when I get to San Francisco, but it probably involves writing. I could be writing scripts, making critiques, or documenting source code. It's a skill that needs improving, and lasts forever.

A friend once started blogging. He said the reason he started was so he could write. He blogged for the sake of writing. It doesn't matter who read it. He wrote his thoughts, observations, and published it on the internet.

Maybe my INTJ personality is good at writing. I can't draw but I sure can place my thoughts onto paper, placing forth my judgement and personal observations.

Ugh, but non-fiction is boring. I hope I can write something cool, like an Alan Moore script!

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Exit Through the Gift Shop

Posted on [January 2, 2011](#) by [Rahil](#)

Note: I published this immediately after writing; It is unproofread.

Before watching [Exit Through the Gift Shop](#) it sounded like it was a movie instead of a documentary. I normally fall asleep on documentaries. To keep me awake, the documentary has to be more than a typical documentary that provides knowledge about a subject. It has to have some movie elements to keep it compelling throughout, like the thrill of "Man on Wire" or the cinematography of "Food Inc.". Gladly it was more.

I'm interested in all types of art and media: films, comics, fashion, whatever. As long as it seems like the creator tried to create something original, I'm happy to observe. Street Art is no different. I've only glimpsed at some popular street art on the internet. I can't recall exactly how, but a likely example would be: a friend instant messages me [a stop motion animated film by blu](#), then I Wikipedia him, which leads to more Wikipedia articles, and eventually I find Banksy and Shepard Fairey, among others.

It did well on metacritic, Ebert liked it (my ratings are similar to his), and the Netflix summary on the DVD case cover was very appealing to me.

"Filmmaker Thierry Guetta had been casually documenting the underground world of street art for years,

but when he encounters Banksy, an elusive British stencil artist, his project takes a fascinating twist. Unimpressed with Guetta's footage, Banksy takes over filmmaking duties and Guetta reinvents himself as a street artist named Mr. Brainwash — and, much to Banksy's surprise, immediately becomes a darling of the Los Angeles art scene."

On to the movie...

The movie itself is very good. The main character felt real, Street Art is displayed, questions are asked.

The main character, Thierry Guetta, is a French guy who has, since childhood, filmed—err video recording—everything in life. When he starts taping his street artist cousin, Invader, he really gets into it. He goes out at night on rooftops to record Invader, and soon more famous people, notably, Banksy.

Banksy is a modern famous street artist, possibly helped by the anonymity of himself, but still a legit artist. When it comes time for Thierry to create a film out of the hundreds of unlabeled tapes in storage, he fails. The film stinks, because Thierry is not a filmmaker, nor an artist. Banksy takes over, creating the film being watched, while Thierry goes on to make his own art.

Thierry goes on to create a showcase similar to the one he recorded for Banksy. He hires a ton of people, morally good, hard-working people. Emulating the styles of the artists he recorded, his showcase becomes a media sensation, making him a celebrity. He goes on to sell his work, auctioning pieces off at lucrative prices.

It's paining to any artist, or anyone who even appreciates art, that a person could use hype and copy popularized styles to make millions of dollars. It's especially paining to Banksy, as it seems it is the main motive he made the film. I've personally seen this happen in every medium. Listen to the radio, watch a mainstream movie, I feel the pain too.

The main thing here is that Thierry is a genuinely flawed person. He's not smart (I believe one person called him retarded). He's not artistic. He's just ambitious. With sheer ambition he is able to become famous, using accomplices better than himself.

He is shown to have ADD, not being able to focus, not even capable of creating a single art piece. Throughout the movie it is his hired assistants that do the work for him. In one of the extras, where he was to create one piece for a multi-artist exhibition, he asked for help, getting frustrated after trying for less than 30 seconds.

There are many lines said by Guetta, through his clumsy English, that strengthen the character. Simultaneously there are many lines said by Banksy, which question what art is. Sure, Guetta deliberately copied the people whom he videotaped, becoming an overnight celebrity with a piece as simple as a pop culture image with a mustache...but this shows how small the difference can be between art and a joke.

After watching the movie, I watched what I guessed are the two shorter extras [I'll watch the other two tomorrow]. Then, I read the Wikipedia articles on the movie, Banksy, and Thierry Guetta. Before this, I didn't know it was actually directed by Banksy! I then read that people and critics speculate the authenticity of the film. That the entire film was a hoax. Banksy created the character.

I recalled the movie in my head, questioning how plausible the main character was. I watch all serious films alone, taking it all in at once. I don't think about plot holes, or question character's motives, I just absorb it all feebly...but as I recalled the main character and the plausibility of the plot, it was quite ridiculous. A dimwitted nobody becomes an overnight celebrity? Yet, the film was so good, that Thierry felt real.

The entire movie fits in well into hoax though. Banksy could've created this inferior artist, and the art behind it, and even display it in the public. The character's name IS Mr. Brainwash... Still, I feel the character is too good to create. Maybe this guy, Thierry, is real. Then Banksy met him, took some of his old tapings of family events, and created the rest.

The film itself is great, and the thought that the entire thing may be a hoax makes it even greater. Banksy remains unidentified. The credited director is simply, "Banksy". His elusiveness intrigues me, as does his art.

Posted in [Film Reviews](#) | Tagged [art](#), [artist](#), [Banksy](#), [documentary](#), [Fairey](#), [grafitti](#), [Guetta](#), [Invader](#), [MBW](#), [Mr. Brainwash](#), [Shepard](#), [street](#), [Thierry](#) | [2 Comments](#) |

Save your Netflix ratings

Posted on [December 11, 2010](#) by [Rahil](#)

I have a data whoring personality. I have way to many things-to-do lists, and text files with data which can be easily found on the internet. I'm trying to move away from this, yet I still persist.

Previously, to download my Netflix Ratings I used to use a [script](#) in Greasemonkey, but that didn't work this time. After some Googling, I found [LikeMinds](#) (SaveMyRatings).

"LikeMinds is a service for sharing your favorites and discovering new stuff; including movies, books, music, people and places, with the help of other like-minded people.

LikeMinds also allows you to share your ratings with friends by quickly copying your ratings from different websites including Netflix, Blockbuster, Amazon, Flixster, Yahoo, IMDB, RottenTomatoes , iTunes, Winamp, GoodReads, Shelfari and many more websites and applications."

I signed up and was able to import my Netflix ratings to the LikeMinds server, but I had trouble finding how to import it to a local file. Then I found this [link](#). I had to log into Facebook for some reason, but it worked!

Movie Title	Year	Genre	Rating	Hours
156 The Good, the Bad and the Ugly	1966	Action	Approved	8.2 hrs
157 Days of Being Wild	1991	Drama	Unrated	8.2 hrs
158 Eastern Promises	2007	Crime	R	8.2 hrs
159 Fallen Angels	1995	Drama	R	8.2 hrs
160 The Counterfeiters	2007	Drama	R	8.2 hrs
161 Clerks X: Tenth Anniversary Edition	1994	Comedy	TV-MA	8.2 hrs
162 Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children	2005	Animation	PG-13	8.2 hrs
163 The Fall	2006	Adventure	R	8.2 hrs
164 The Fantastic Mr. Fox	2009	Adventure		8.2 hrs
165 Delicatessen	1991	Comedy	R	8.2 hrs
166 Deliverance	1972	Adventure	R	8.2 hrs
167 Drag Me to Hell	2009	Horror		8.2 hrs
168 City Lights	1931	Comedy	Passed	8.2 hrs
169 Boy A	2007	Drama		8.2 hrs
170 The Bourne Ultimatum	2007	Action	PG-13	8.2 hrs
171 Clerks	1994	Comedy	TV-MA	8.2 hrs
172 Children of Men	2006	Adventure	R	8.2 hrs
173 The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari	2005	Drama		8.2 hrs
174 Billy Madison	1995	Comedy	PG-13	8.2 hrs
175 Blow	2001	Biography	R	8.2 hrs
176 Black Dynamite	2008	Action	NR	8.2 hrs
177 The Twilight Samurai	2002	Drama		10.2 hrs
178 Toy Story 3	2010	Animation		10.2 hrs
179 The Usual Suspects	1995	Crime	R	10.2 hrs
180 This Is England	2006	Drama	Unrated	10.2 hrs
181 Trainspotting	1996	Comedy	R	10.2 hrs
182 V for Vendetta	2005	Drama	R	10.2 hrs
183 Tropic Thunder	2008	Action	R	10.2 hrs
184 Up	2009	Animation		10.2 hrs
185 TĀ'kyĀ' sonata	2008	Drama		10.2 hrs
186 WALL-E	2008	Animation	G	10.2 hrs
187 Waltz with Bashir	2008	Animation		10.2 hrs

LikeMinds saves your ratings into a CSV file, which can be opened with Excel, then easily manipulated to however you like.

There were some errors. Some foreign movie titles contained weird characters. I even found a movie I can't find on Netflix—"Wild, Wild West: The Steel Assassin" from 1999! Regardless, my storage greedy personality was satisfied.

I went even further adding friends similar to me, which resulted with a list of "movies new to you that your 19 LikeMinds rated highly".

Title year newer than	Genre All	# People At least 3	Avg. Rating ▼	Your Rating (click to rate)
26. South Park - Season 3 (1999)		4	★★★★★	★★★★★
27. Freaks (1932)	Drama	4	★★★★★	★★★★★
28. The Grapes of Wrath (1940)	Drama	4	★★★★★	★★★★★
29. South Park - Season 4 (2000)		4	★★★★★	★★★★★
30. La Strada (1954)	Drama	4	★★★★★	★★★★★
31. Babylon 5 - Season 2 (1994)		3	★★★★★	★★★★★
32. Schizopolis (1996)	Comedy	3	★★★★★	★★★★★
33. The Long Goodbye (1973)	Crime	3	★★★★★	★★★★★
34. Bar Time: A San Francisco Soap Opera (1979)	Short	3	★★★★★	★★★★★
35. The Corporation (2003)	Documentary	3	★★★★★	★★★★★
36. Richard Pryor: Live and Smokin' (1971)	Comedy	3	★★★★★	★★★★★
37. Days of Heaven (1978)	Drama	3	★★★★★	★★★★★
38. Rugrats Go Wild (2003)	Animation	3	★★★★★	★★★★★
39. Absolument fabuleux (2001)	Comedy	3	★★★★★	★★★★★
40. Chushingura (1907)	Drama	3	★★★★★	★★★★★
41. How Green Was My Valley (1941)	Drama	3	★★★★★	★★★★★
42. The Venture Bros. - Season 2 (2003)		3	★★★★★	★★★★★
43. Laura (1944)	Crime	3	★★★★★	★★★★★
44. Absolutely Fabulous: Absolutely Not! (1998)	Comedy	3	★★★★★	★★★★★
45. The Madness of King George (1994)	Biography	3	★★★★★	★★★★★
46. The Sopranos - Season 6 (2006)		3	★★★★★	★★★★★
47. Rock Rivals - Season 1 (2008)		3	★★★★★	★★★★★
48. Mystery Train (1989)	Comedy	3	★★★★★	★★★★★

This list already seemed far more useful than any recommendations I've received from Netflix! Now if only I rated all of my music...

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Source Code

Posted on [June 1, 2010](#) by [Rahil](#)

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 - 410
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 - CS495
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 - CS456
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Posted on [June 1, 2010](#) by [Rahil](#)

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Rahil's Notepad

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