

Collected notes from the American Academy of Advertising's Global Conference, Honolulu, Hawaii, May 31-June 2, 2013. Each note item, individually posted on the listserve ADFORUM during the days of the conference, are collected here with edits for clarifications and an effort to remove most of the typos, redundancies and writing errors, while not touching any originally-inadvertent insults, semi-accidental slights and intended innuendoes by which everyone who might feel guilty would.

→ Ever so not humbly submitted by your scribe, Herb Rotfeld



<http://www.auburn.edu/~rotfehj>

### Note 1: Limitations

From the first sessions, I noticed that the presentations by younger attendees all have a section of limitations that are rattled off as a final slide. Or one that lists related projects they will probably not undertake called future research. Why, I know not. Any research limitations impact how the study can be interpreted and what can be validly concluded from findings, so they should be integrated into any discussion of the implications or conclusions, or sometimes part of the explanation of the research method, but they don't serve much of a purpose if they only exist in an added section or listed at the end where they tend to be ignored. Similarly, as opposed to providing a section listing future research, it would be more meaningful to incorporate relevant and interesting future research proposals in discussion sections where appropriate.

But then, they also spend too much time giving lists of name dropping statements of who did similar or related studies, and too little describing what they found and why anyone might care....Another item, for another time....

### Note 2: References

I was the session chair – moderator and time keeper – for a morning session. And as I made the opening introduction for the first presentation, I passed around the room the full reference lists for the session's all four papers. Before the conference, as they sent me their papers, I told the authors to bring copies of their references to give to anyone in attendance. The conference book would not be out for many weeks, and as has become the norm for any conference, they probably all would just have an abstracts in there. So as the presentations at the session had in-body citations to all sorts of past related works, the audience could tell what papers were mentioned.

You might have seen a comment on this that I posted on Adforum and Elmar almost a year ago. At a marketing and public policy meeting at the end of May 2012, I was on the program as a designated commentator and moderator for one session. The papers in our session had only abstracts in the conference book that was distributed electronically the day before the meeting (as was the case for all except six of the research presentations from the entire program). Yet, in the slides for each presentation, as was common for almost every presentation at the conference, many statements would end with a reference to authority, a citation written in journal style, such as "(Flintstone 2012)." But while the citation in a manuscript would refer to the list of references at the end of the paper, members of the audience didn't have any additional information during the presentation. One person at my session last year did it 9 times, and the last one did it for 18 references. One presenter had 27 of these in body citations, including 7 as part of the slides covering the study's supposed implications, plus one as a footnote to a chart.

But there is an easy solution, or so I think.

Conference books these days are electronic, removing any problems with space limitations. So in directions for materials to appear in the compilations, authors could be required to provide the full reference list. Then everyone could see the names dropped in the presentation. This would be a simple change that would provide more information for everyone, both attendees and those who get the conference book at a later time. If the conference doesn't have a book of the papers and presentations, or if the conference collection is to be distributed after the meeting, presenters would be required to bring copies of a printed list of all articles that would be listed as part of the presentation. If presenters are reminded a mere dozen or so times before the meeting to bring the reference list, some might actually do it.

So at least at one session today, everyone knew the references. I wish all other session had done the same thing.

#### Note 3: Style

The campus for University of Hawaii Shidler College of Business where we had all Friday events is more outdoor than indoor. Presentations are in classrooms, but everything else gathers in an outdoor courtyard area. The hallways are mostly exposed and we all were attired for the tropical climate, or variations of it. Lots of men are in patterned shirts. Female grad students are presenting research papers attired in nice dresses and various types of high heels. Sheila is non-sparkly in a black dress with purple flowers. Jef has shorts and walking shoes with black socks. Lots of people have various types of red sneakers. An AAA member who was a one time state level runner-up in Miss America pageant has



on green pants the same color as the guy with the Moe Howard haircut on "Big Bang Theory" – which is also the color I recall my sister made me wear for the tux at her wedding – and other observations are being withheld from those whose wrath might be dangerous to my health.

One of my Auburn colleagues said that I had to make a presentation clothed in a manner appropriate for Hawaii. How should I know what that is? I researched a few YouTube videos for guidance. I think I nailed it, . . . .

#### Note 4: Oops

One side effect of so much outdoor space of the campus for the meetings is that there are a few areas of slick puddles in unexpected unfortunate locations. A few people did some creative dance steps to avoid a fall. One grad student in heels had both legs shoot out from under her in a full tuchus landing in the mess as several people rushed to help. Sneakers didn't save you. I took a step and had a near-disaster landing, halted only by the intervention of Alice's shoulder providing a counter-force of upward push against my forehead. She is bruised, but while I was banged silly no one could tell the difference. When I go senile, no one will know.

#### Note 5: No P at UH

William Marsteller, founder of a large business-to-business ad agency and the Burson-Marsteller public relations company, wrote a book 30 years ago titled "Creative Management." He indicated his three basic rules for business success: never tell a lie, never betray a confidence, and never pass up an opportunity to go to the toilet. Marsteller's third rule is really in force on this campus where you are lucky to find a loo that is also unlocked and available.

Our presentation sessions in the University of Hawaii Shidler College of Business today are in classrooms located in towers lettered A through G. Some towers don't have any restrooms. In the other

towers, they are on seemingly random unmarked floors, sometimes down hallways narrower than a classroom desktop, or behind an unmarked door that seems to lead to offices instead of restrooms. And many times, our people report finding the door locked, or the entrance blocked off for cleaning. Asking a wandering student is not much help, because despite their friendly and always helpful intent, as several responded to inquiries indicating they didn't know of any. I found one location by asking a UH faculty member who spotted a crazy visitor and talked to me about various sundry topics of curiosity. On my own later on, I couldn't find the place again, making the first trip akin to a mystical visit to Shangra La.

The campus is very accessible, with every ramp, elevator or sidewalk stamped with numerous signs indicating handicap assisting routes. But if you spot an available toilet, you use it, because you never know when you'd find the next one.

#### Note 6: Eat well

Living in a campus community in small town South as I do, the restaurant options are fairly narrow, consisting mostly chain restaurants, fast food of one sort or another, bad pizza plus many places for faux Mexican microwaved dishes. So in travels, I follow the maxim of Mae West who said, "When faced with a choice of two evils, I always take the one I haven't tried." A good guide to trying new things, unless your body is prone to dislike foods you like with its own open rebellion against gustatory experimentation. Anyway, the maxim means that when traveling you focus consumption on foods whose names or appearances defy recognition from the realm of past experiences. And always remember that calories consumed away from home don't count.

We went by bus at 7:30 the morning of the first full day of sessions to the UH campus where there was a continental breakfast available before the first session. Fruit, pastry and some cake items I didn't recognize and therefore had to eat.

Then at the first break, we had some nice snacks of various types stacked out by the coffee, plus some more pastry and fruit and tasty cookies that I did recognize, but they were cookies. Then after another set of sessions, we enjoyed a buffet lunch of all sorts of stuff: including chicken that didn't look like chicken with a taste of rattlesnake my Uncle Lou cooked up once, rolled up rice things that I didn't recognize thus had to try, some sort of other stuff that felt fattening and tasted good, potato stuff, a noodle dish and salad. And when you were done there were two desert cakes, so rich and hi-cal that weight gain happens by walking past the table: a fluffy cherry thingy, plus a death by chocolate cake that would cause an acne breakout on a geriatric elephant, both of them pre-cut in sizes large enough for a football players' training table.

At the break between the afternoon sessions, more cookies.

Then for the evening reception, there were more snacks after a short speech by the UH dean. I said snacks, but there was enough there for meals. The table included various foods that I didn't recognize, sushi, sort-of fishless sushi, a quesadilla thing, I think. In theory and in the program, it was a reception, yet we had before us a huge spread of stuff I did not recognize and therefore ate, as others did, too, making it a *de facto* meal.

We then rode a bus back to the hotel, where some people talked of going out to eat, but really, why bother....

#### Note 7: Starting a new day

Still full from eating yesterday, so I didn't miss lack of morning snacks with the coffee in the hotel. In our hotel rooms, we get the usual complimentary coffee and a good tea if you like it green. At the morning coffee by the session meeting rooms, we had two types of dark tea, one type in decaf, and no green tea.

Yesterday, I noted that Alice saved me from a dangerous fall by heroically experiencing the happenstance of her shoulder catching my head. This morning, she is badly bruised while I am merely more addled than normal.



Yesterday, Don presented two papers and two different sessions. This morning, he is chair of special topic session. His opening slide called himself a "Donosaur;" another speaker called herself a "Jamiraptor." It is session on digital, so he called me out for using pen and paper for notes.

#### Note 8: Predictions

As we have many sessions that involve predictions of the future uses digital media, the session I moderated yesterday versus this morning's special topic panel gives me a weird juxtaposition of thoughts.

Yesterday morning, as a very nervous out of breath grad student completed her presentation, I blurted out the observation that I felt like I experienced the final act of "Bye Bye Birdie." Many of those in the room laughed. Apparently, a significant number of them were old enough to have viewed and remember the movie. Yet anyone of that age should have had many experiences of hearing many predictions of the future of various media forms which have consistently, predictably, been proven mastodon-sized wrong.

A comment I read a few years ago was that believing digital distance education can replace campus classes requires also accepting that phone sex can replace sex (though on the latter, when I repeated it at the session a friend said it works that way for him). If your model of campus education is the presentation on stage to 100+ students with tests requiring memorize and regurgitate, online is an easy transfer. And most online classes take this easy route. But if your view of learning involves interaction and nuance, there is a certain ineffable inter-personal quality that online does not readily capture.

#### Note 9: Break notes

Coffee, tea, very rich chocolate brownies, plus chocolate chip or macadamia nut cookies. But it is only a 15 minute break, and no break at all between the second and third collections of presentations today, then a few hours of free time before the big dinner tonight.

Unlike the UH campus experience yesterday, today's sessions in the hotel eliminates problems for those that "gotta go" in the sense of engaging in elimination of body wastes, with restrooms about thirty feet away from the registration and coffee/tea/snack tables.

Today I read my earlier notes already posted, spotting the verbal redundancies or other errors. I can blame the automatic spell check or typos, though the prime problem is not just difficulty of typing on an iPad, but rather, it is making corrections on the device. Laptops are for creating materials and tablets are for consuming it.

At the session I just left, a comment was made about the drop in email discussions and the "death" of listserv groups such as adforum. However, that same session had multiple jokes about my postings of these notes for the past couple days, complete with boisterous laugh tracks indicating that almost everyone there is still on adforum and sometimes even reading it.

Note 10: As small as you can go

At the research presentations, the typical font size on screen would be content so small as to be unreadable beyond the first row. And by calling it the norm, you must recognize that many more are not readable from a greater distance than where the speaker is standing. They probably all look great on the computer screen, but not as a room-wide display.



I wonder what they do on campus?



Note 11: He's not here

[Ivan Preston, 1931-2011: AAA fellow, past president, recipient of Outstanding Contribution to Research award that now carries his name.]

He passed on in early 2011, but many discussions make me think of him. I miss him. This picture was at one of the group tourist outings for the last AAA conference he attended, Summer 2010 in Milan, Italy.

Note maybe-12: MIA

Years ago, John Leckenby excused himself as he flew past a few of us in the hallway of an AAA conference by saying he was going to a session where some University of Texas grad students were presenting. At that time, Texas had a huge number of student presentations at AAA meetings and he tried to attend them all, even if they weren't his students. At a different time of another place, he gave a brief descriptive phrase for those faculty that don't show up at the sessions for their students who are presenting a paper which lists the faculty member as co-author. A friend at another school told me that a member of his doctoral committee would take the department travel money every year to go to the conferences as co-author with a student, but never attend the presentations – or any other sessions, receptions or meetings – instead going tourist in the conference town. I guess for some in Honolulu, a luau or servicing a spouse are more important than conference receptions, luncheons or sessions.

At this conference, some of the faculty co-authors didn't travel – one told me he won't go anywhere where the flight is over 6 hours – so they aren't in town. No foul there. I know of at least one department chair at the conference who tries to be at every session for his program's students. The AAA Secretary & Treasurer have been attending at least one session for every period, plus all of the receptions and meals, where they've been seen talking to our young presenters or first time attendees, maybe encouraging them to keep coming to future global conferences or next year's meeting in Atlanta.

Note 12.2 (thereby avoiding a note #13): Lost

In the break between the last session for Saturday and the final reception with dinner, I went for a walk down the road outside the hotel that runs parallel to the shore line. There were many shopping areas along the way, with a shade from buildings to help a concerned pedestrian avoid too much sunshine.

As Woody Alan put it, "With a time bathing in the sun, I don't tan. I stroke." Although it is only one street, I managed to get lost. I think I got spun around in a mini-mall type area, so when I came out on a different road, it resulted in my heading away from the ocean. I eventually realized the error, made two or three other errors, then got back on track after conversations with friendly homeless gentlemen, plus two guides working some sort of tourist stations, a man working in a shop selling leather jackets (no, I didn't ask who buys heavy leather jackets in Hawaii), and another friendly local who described for me the nature of some of the strange food for sale at a kiosk.

Two things stood out of my observations during my rambling meandering.

There are a number of men and women mostly-tourists walking around the stores who are closer to my age than that of my undergrad students, wearing outfits that, as my parents would put it in a well-rehearsed stereo when seeing similar sights near their home in south Florida, "You can see everything. And you don't wanna!" The outfits might be sexy for those possessing the body fat of Gabrielle Anwar, but on all others it just appears on the range from weird to gross. Despite the all-to-common sight, people nearby would often stare in a manner akin to those found watching the aftermath of a car wreck. Other tourists were grabbing cell phones to snap for their travel album the view of scenes such as the person with a Lycra induced "muffin top" in the sense of those \$6 muffinzilla bran offerings at airport snack counters. (Maybe there is a "People of Honolulu" web site like People of Wal-Mart. <http://www.peopleofwalmart.com/>)

Of greater attention for me was what at first appeared to be a movie production of some sort, with multiple expensive cameras on tripods, moving tracks, or ground mounts for multiple angles. Then I saw the bride & groom types in gown and tux. At another upscale hotel along the route of my trek, I saw a second, similar production, with more gear and crew than I've experienced on commercial fashion advertising shoots, plus one young man whose only job seemed to consist of retrieving the bride's hat which kept blowing into the street. As I wound my way back to the conference Marriott, I saw the first extravaganza still going strong, with new shots posed on stairways that wound around a fountain, now joined by a half-dozen additional couples in tuxes and bridesmaid-one-use dresses. As I lingered, one of the camera assistants came over and talked to me, saying she is a local arrangement host from the hotel. Ever polite, she asked if they were blocking my ability to pass by. Of course, I was compelled to talk more than just say I was not being blocked. She pointed to the happy couple and attendants, indicating that they were participants in a wedding with everyone coming in from Japan, including the main photographer and his prime assistants. The wedding is tomorrow, I think she said, but today they are doing the poses for the wedding album. I guess it is wedding as potlatch, or the Japanese version of the modern American bar mitzvah.

#### Note 14: The end is the beginning

Our closing reception and last supper was outside, by one of the conference hotel pool areas closed off for our "private party" (as the sign said). We were to have white tablecloths and the conference attendees plus a few family members appeared in the usual range of attire seen from the days earlier: one of the younger women was stunningly presented in dress, heels and even an interesting do done to hair; Sheila was back to sparkly, sharing the glitz of her glittering shawl with a loan to the conference manager; Edoardo was in his usual impeccable coat and tie; Jef was dressed like a track photographer for the Indie Speedway (which he is); Liz had eye catching jewelry; and the rest of us just muddled along. I was less disheveled than



usual because I was accompanied by she-who-shares-my-life. The bruised shoulder was covered and not flashed. The treasurer continued to talk to the young, new members, and I learned new things of some old members. For example, someone said to me that Hairong brought his wife, to which I asked, "Hairong has a wife?" (Her name is Judy!)

The tables around the pool area were set for six, with some in more windy areas than others. Liz and spousal unit Mike joined myself and she-who-lets-me-pet-the-cat, and we were all honored by the added presence of our fantastic overworked, underpaid and never praised enough Conference Manager Betty Djerf plus the Most Exalted Executive Director Pat Rose, both of whom made so many of the conference details work out. The amazing turf-&-surf meal was a beef prepped in an unusual new way and a HUGE lobster item in a different kind of not-known-to-me-before covering, veggies that looked like shrunken kudzu, plus creme brûlée for the dessert. The hotel contact was hovering at far edge of pool to make certain all went okay.

A great end point to a memorable conference.

But the trip is not over for some of us, staying in the hotel, or at least in Hawaii, for a few additional days with the conference room rate available till Wednesday of the coming week. As the conference ends, the tourist days begin. In addition, the conference manager arranged for several tour options at a 20% discount for members as long as we made reservations online before leaving home. While waiting for our tour bus Sunday morning, Sheila walked past going to her different earlier-departing tour and didn't even see wife and me, since, I guess, she was eagerly anticipating her tour.

So this makes it three in a four-year period of amazing second AAA global conferences for our members in addition to our regular annual meetings in the Spring: Milan (2010), Brisbane (2011), and this year Honolulu. Next Spring, the annual meeting will be in Atlanta, with another global conference in 2014 on a different small volcanic Pacific island, or so I seem to recall.

→ The moving fingers type, then the hand falls asleep (which relates to a joke in note 8)