Human Infrastructure Magazine: You Control Your Own Destiny

# You Control Your Own Destiny

## by Ethan Banks

On a recent snowy Saturday, I was part of a six-person team breaking trail to Owl's Head Mountain, a remote peak in New Hampshire's White Mountain National Forest. The usual winter route to Owl's Head involves two bushwhacks to save distance. I'd only traveled the first bushwhack before, and that was in summer--not in winter after a fresh snowfall.

A bushwhack involves traveling off of established trails. For this reason, I was happy that the rest of the trail-breaking team was more experienced than me. Although I have over 160 summits and 1,000 miles in NH's White Mountains to my credit, the rest of the crew made me look like a woodlands newcomer.

My assumption was that the more experienced folks would be wise about safely negotiating the bushwhack portions of the hike. After all, these sections are oft used by folks who have frequented Owl's Head.

Imagine my disappointment when these folks were, more or less, winging it. Several tenths into the first bushwhack, the current team lead both misidentified remote landmarks and his ground position. He never took a compass bearing. He didn't have a GPS track. He was making an educated guess. We completed the section with minimal drama, but I was unimpressed.

The second bushwhack section was new to me. The track ascends the southwestern face of Owl's Head following a couple of gullies and an old skidder road from logging done a century ago. The track is also aggressively steep for several hundred vertical feet, traversing a section of mostly open hardwoods found below the spruce line.

Steep terrain is a normal situation when you're a peakbagger. Tough climbs come with the territory. Winter adds complexity and danger to steep areas, making this second bushwhack rather more perilous than the first.

During the ascent, I noticed that my snowshoes were causing the snowpack to give way. No one else seemed to be having as much trouble with that as I was, which made sense as the heaviest member of the team by at least fifty pounds. Bending down to investigate the footpath, I saw that we were traveling through 18 inches of snow over hard ice. Oh. That explained the slippage.

Even so, I was confident that these experienced hikers with more trips to Owl's Head than I could count with all my fingers and toes wouldn't have led me into anything too dangerous. I dug in hard with my snowshoe toe crampons, completed the ascent, and bagged the summit.

The descent is where we met real danger. Once back at the top of the aggressively steep section, "butt-sliding" became the preferred option to avoid pitching over face-first down the bushwhack track. Butt-sliding sounds like fun (whee!), but on this day, it was perilous. Snow-over-ice makes for nearly friction-free sliding, and gravity was a fearsome enemy.

Did I make it down? Yes. Was it close? Closer than I wanted it to be. In two cases, grabbing a tree on the way by was the difference between arresting my slide and

gaining uncontrollable speed across open slopes that would have ended in injury.

We all made it out of the woods, but I am left frustrated by the experience. I could have safely negotiated the icy pitches with full crampons and an ice axe, both of which I own. But I did not bring them with me. These items add weight I didn't want to pack needlessly on an 18 mile day, and my experienced fellow hikers suggested that they were not required for this trip. I assumed that to be true.

My choices rest on my shoulders, but I trusted others to do my thinking. I went along with their choices, assuming that what was good for them would also be good for me. Whoops.

## Your Choices Are *Your* Choices

There are times in your career where you'll get advice from others. In fact, I recommend getting advice from others. Advice can be good.

However, remember that other people aren't you. Other people have different personalities, ambitions, and priorities. The advice they give you is likely to be honest

and well-intentioned, but don't lean too heavily on it when making decisions.

You control your own destiny. Ultimately, the decisions you make are your decisions. You have to choose when to change jobs. When to go after a cert. When your compensation package isn't good enough. When your employer is asking too much of your family. When it's time to do more...or less.

People will tell you what they think, but you have to make the call. Sometimes, the call you make will differ from the advice you get. That call might be exactly the right decision.

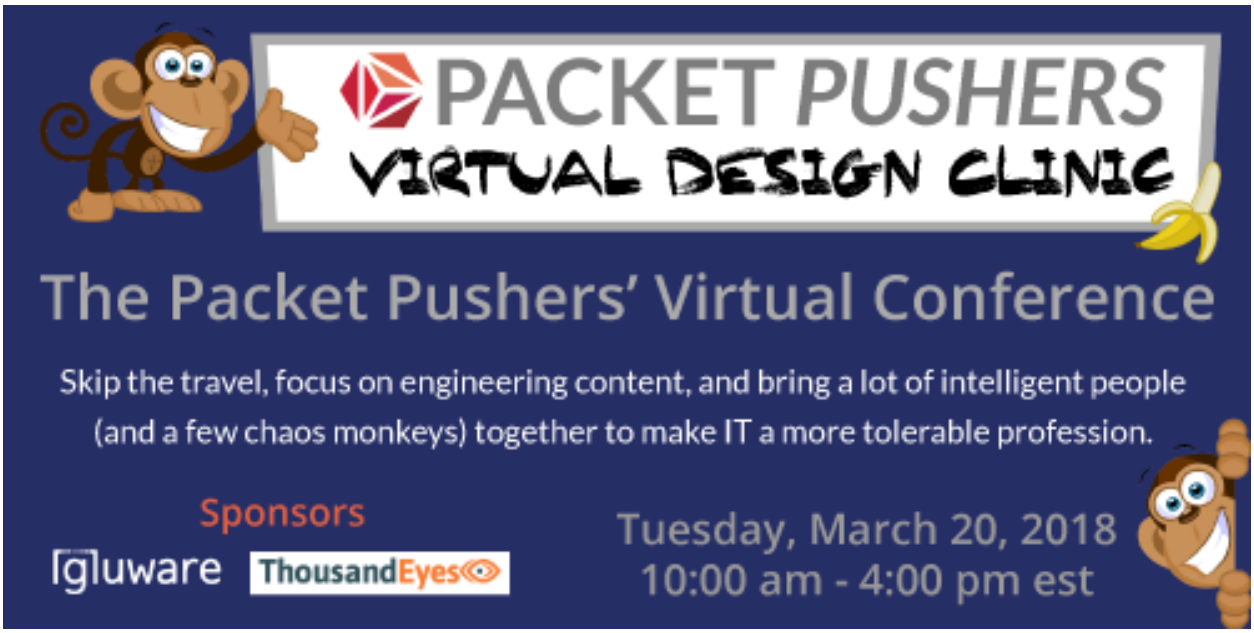
# Packet Pushers Virtual Design Clinic

## Sign Up Now!

The Packet Pushers will host a Virtual Design Clinic on Tuesday, March 20, 2018. This live, online event will offer engineering deep dives on network challenges and solutions.

It will feature presentations from the Packet Pushers, independent speakers, and sponsors. After the event, we'll make the presentations available free for Packet Pushers members.

Register here to reserve your space.




# Internets Of Interest

**A collection of blogs, news items, white papers, and other things from the Internet you might find interesting. Or not. It's fine either way.**

## The AWS Love/Hate Relationship with Data Gravity - Cloud Architect Musings

Kenneth Hui breaks down the challenges and the opportunities that data gravity presents for Amazon's AWS. One the one hand, AWS growth could be stymied by the difficulty of moving existing data into the cloud. On the other hand, as more organizations build applications within AWS, and AWS adds more services to extract value from that data, Amazon creates a virtuous cycle.

LINK

## My CCIE Journey - Bruno Wollmann on Networking

If you're preparing to climb the CCIE mountain, Bruno Wollmann has a great post filled with study tips and test-taking strategies gleaned from hard-won experience. As he notes in the blog:

"...an expert level exam requires more than just expert level technical knowledge. My other weaknesses, exposed

by the exam, were a lack of a true plan, a lack of exam management, a lack of time management and not knowing the Cisco documentation nearly as well as I should."

Take the opportunity to learn from his experience.

LINK

## Become A Packet Pushers Member

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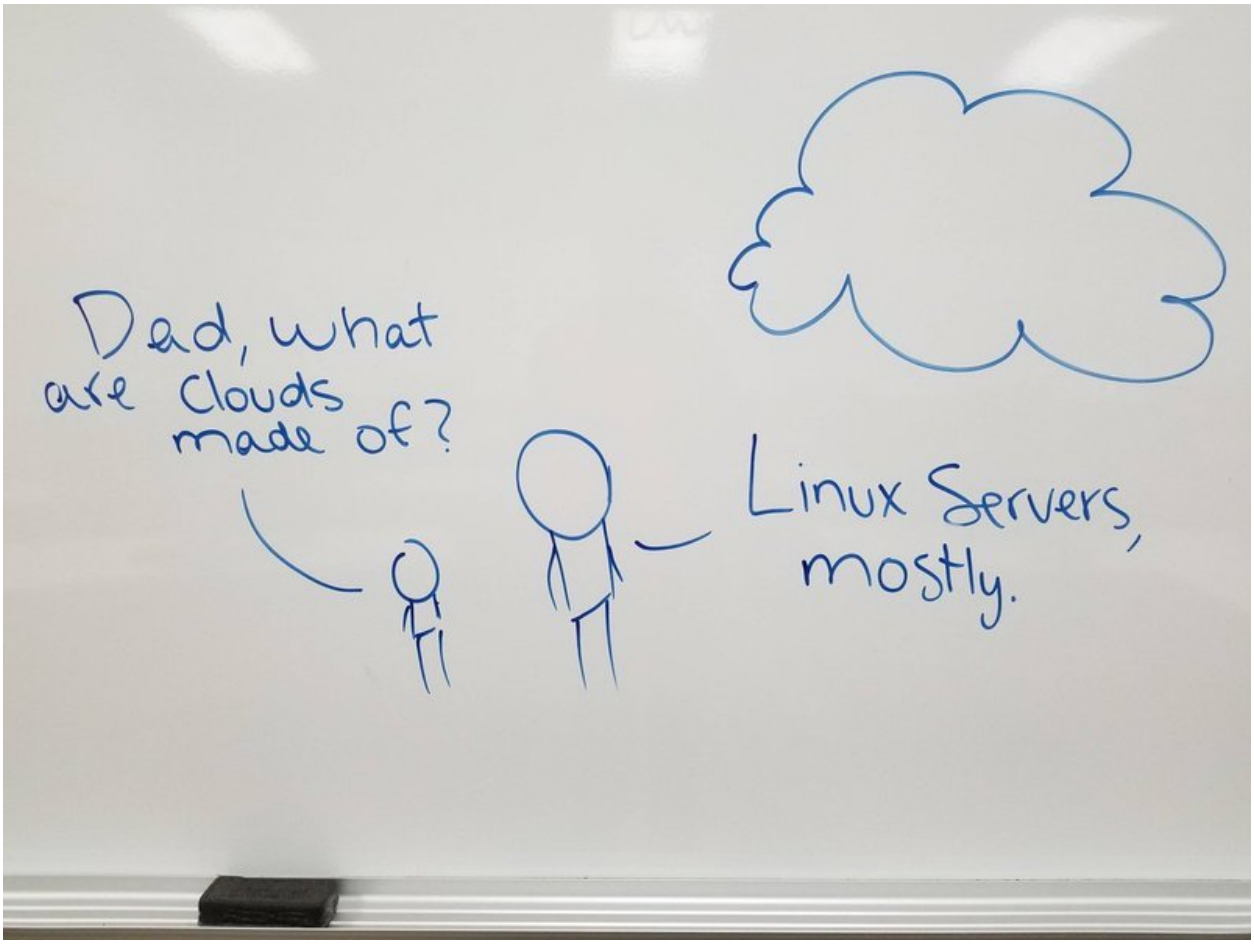
# Thanks Internet!

**The flotsam and jetsam of the vast social media ocean.**



Source: @ImProgrammerNet

# Product News

**Find out about interesting new products, or get essential information about things you might already be using.**

## ONF's New Stratum Project Targets The Data Plane

This week the Open Networking Foundation (ONF) announced Stratum, a new software package that will allow an SDN controller to program the data plane of network switches.

Stratum, which aims to bring programmability all the way to the silicon layer of the network, will be based on code originally developed by Google. Google is contributing the code to the ONF.

LINK

## Citrix Acquires DNS Service Cedexis

Citrix has acquired Cedexis, a company that provides a DNS service that can steer requests based on real-time performance data.

Cedexis collects a variety of metrics to measure the performance of cloud services, CDNs, and service providers. Using these metrics, Cedexis can make more informed
management decisions.

LINK

# Recent Podcasts

## The five podcasts most recently published podcasts from Packet Pushers:

PQ 143: The Strange Dynamics Of Buying & Selling Enterprise IT

Datanauts 125: Security Gamification & Training New Talent

Network Break 175: Viptela, Meraki Get Upgrades; Scrupulous Ransomware Criminals

Show 380: Network Engineer Roundtable: What's On Your Mind?

PQ 142: TCP Latency Monitoring With Ruru

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# Editor's Note

Hello! As mentioned in the last issue, we've changed the application we use to send newsletters, which means a different set of design tools, which means a slightly different look for the newsletter.

If you have suggestions for how to make Human Infrastructure better please send them to drew@packetpushers.net.

Thanks to those who wrote in after the last issue. The two most popular requests were for a Table of Contents, and the ability to view the email in a browser. Unfortunately, this application doesn't support those capabilities, but we've put in a request with the vendor to develop them. I'm not sure if or when they'll deliver, but we'll keep asking.

# Did We Miss Something?

Got a link or an article to share? Do you have a comment, question, or critique? Effusive praise? Scathing reproach? Email it all to humaninfrastructure@packetpushers.net.

## The End Bit

Sponsorship and Advertising - Send an email to humaninfrastructure@packetpushers.net for more information. You could reach 4,985 people.

**Human Infrastructure is bi-weekly newsletter with view, perspectives, and opinions. It is edited and published by Greg Ferro and Drew Conry-Murray from PacketPushers.net. If you'd like to contribute, email Drew at drew.conrymurray@packetpushers.net.**

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