

There is time for cereal-box gazing on weekends, an opportunity to let the cerebral rocks in our boxes clunk and clatter around at will: Call it morning meditation, western-style, you could, something we all do while building a bridge back to this world in the daylight, still halfway mourning our lost dreams.

Today, a bald marketing message hogged a side of the box, hugging the spine of the cardboard rectangle, catching us square on. We stared at the message for some time, steaming our eyes open with hot coffee taken in a huge mug, faces steam-bathed. On the box, someone had cobbled a message, gotten paid real money for it, despite -- or, to spite? -- the deeply-flawed-dumbness of the thing. Perhaps, while we were busy having the most important meal of the day, the cereal makers hoped to blow one right past us, have us not notice it was the least important message we'd see all day or all year.

Took a sec to visually focus, then notice it was one of those QR codes there, sized up largely on the side panel, looking like a GPS data sequence of "Where's Waldo," if you could find a good-enough magnifying glass. The cereal box was really impressed with itself, shooting off multicolored hues in all directions, celebrating this coup of communication, barely able to contain itself, there, on its own cereal container.

If you just couldn't wait for morning to get inside this cereal box, said the message, you could do something about that: Nuzzle your toaster-massager-tanningbed-fax-pizzamaker phone up to the code square, click a button, and get taken to information instantly notifying any impatient consumer of locations on Earth where it was
breakfast time in the world!

If you didn't have a QR code reader, it said, you could text a certain string of numbers to another string of numbers and get info on how you could download a QR code reader and/or program -- however, one was well-cautioned, as best as can be done in two-point type, that standard texting rates would apply, and that this was going to cost you. If that didn't work, the web address of the cereal maker was on the box, too -- perhaps for the moral support of phone operators no-doubt sitting- or standing-by to help us all figure out these tech downloads, or, maybe, to allow us to view helpful cereal-eating tutorials online, or at FacePlace, or TweetyPi, or who knows what, where, and/or why.

Unsocial Media & Cereal Tech

Written by Alex Baer

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Keep in mind, while busy with QR code tutorials and code-reader installations, and with texting and downloads, and with obtaining and installing all this new gear to talk to your phone and help it all talk to everything else, it is useful to remember the original reason for these gyrations: You were trying to get a phone-jump to a point of awareness, at the press of a button, to show you where in the world it was "breakfast time," if, for whatever untimely reason, you "just couldn't wait for morning!"

Or, if you know some geography, you could guess at what was on the opposite side of the world, call it good, *ta-dah!* all done: Total elapsed time, one-point-seven seconds, *no external gear required.*

But, taking this elementary approach would do nothing to fill or quell the rowdy graphics hole on the side panel of a cereal box, no doubt a long-dreaded, long-and-skinny, no-reader's-land zone on a cereal box. By know you know, of course, that such messages are only the byproducts of cereal marketing flakes meaning to spin you into smaller and smaller orbits of tail-chasing, until you are ready to become

A Destructive Force

in the grocery aisle, now appearing as

Lonthar, Cereal Killer, Destroyer of All Such Cereal Boxes in the Known Universe

-- or, at least, in that one store.

Word has it that subsequent boxes of cereal will have QR codes that will take you, in advance, to reputable outfits in your phone's area where bail-bondspeople and good lawyers may be found, *if you just couldn't possibly wait for morning!*

By the way, we really do understand the utility and convenience for some people in their use of social media sites, of the simplicity and ease in providing the whole world updates on all the personal and intimate details of one's life -- then sharing them across the web with an entire planet of strangers looking on, some still in their bathrobes at this time of day.

But, there are always drawbacks to technology, an iceberg or two thousand for every Titanic that comes along. The BBC has just found two more such drawbacks, not such hot news for a couple of guys, a speeder and a bigamist -- two individuals, although combining offenses into one would not have been much surprising.

The bigamist, turns out, was outed when two U.S. women noticed each was married to the very same man, a prison officer, no less, meaning he may someday return to his same institution as

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he'd done all along, albeit in a new, alternative capacity -- somewhat like the worker canned at the Employment Office, still having to go in each day anyway, just for a brand new, different reason, after that.

In the case of the bigamist, one wife popped up on a site's "People you may know" feature -- wedding cake, same hubby, and all. Pierce County Prosecutor Mark Lindquist says, "Facebook is now a place where people discover things about each other they end up reporting to law enforcement." This is exactly what happened to the speeder, a 50-year-old doctor in Japan who tooted around in his Ferrari, posting a video of him driving -- about 80 miles an hour in a zone posted at 25. Viewers of the video reported him to police, who calculated his speed based on time and area travelled. The driver could face six months in jail *-or-* pay a fine of \$1,220 dollars. Given a Ferrari 458 Italia -- like the one he drove -- goes for about a quarter million bucks, how much jail time you think the doc will be logging?

Now, if we could just get viewers of all manner of videos in this country to report politicians, bankers, vulture capitalists, and lawbreakers of all kinds, to the police...

Like some more cereal? ☐ Last chance to sugar-coat your day!