

## **All the Worlds Energy this Side of the Access Digital Divide**

Gregory O'Toole February 09, 2006 [www.otoole.info](http://www.otoole.info)

For the first time in the history of mankind, the world and many millions of its inhabitants are physically, and intellectually, connected. This network, as most of us know well, is called the Internet. The network is constantly transmitting messages. Code. Information. Data. It is powered by electricity. The Internet transfers electricity. Therefore, we can safely say this: the internet is a message-concept transport entity.

My wife sold her 1995 Jeep Wrangler recently. She'd had it for a couple of years. It was her main source of mechanized transportation before we met. Since then she's mainly been using my newer, safer, smother-driving Ford Explorer to drive herself back and forth to work everyday. The Jeep just sat in the driveway using up space and two hundred of our earned dollars each month in loan payments and insurance.

She posted it online for free a while back. She used a widely utilized, populated and trafficked web site. She put up a few photographs. No one called. Months later she decided the \$55.00-until-your-car-sells package on [www.cars.com](http://www.cars.com) might be more the way to go. That was Saturday afternoon when that decision was made. By Saturday evening the advertisement was up and running with six photographs and a few brief selling points. On Sunday she got her first calls of interest. On Monday a gentleman said he'd like to come and see the Jeep in person. On Tuesday morning he bought it.

As I was walking home from work at the University of Denver on Wednesday evening, the day after the aforementioned sale, I was thinking about what my wife, Carey, had said about how this man had been behaving since he had agreed to purchase the vehicle. He'd been running all over town, she told me on the phone Tuesday afternoon, making sure the title transfer and license plates and DMV paper work were all in order. He was excited, she confirmed, and very obviously was not wanting to loose hold of the situation that would allow him to secure this purchase. You see, the title transfer was set to happen on

Friday, the guy knew he was getting a deal with the agreed purchase price, and he wasn't about to let it slip away. Makes perfect sense to me.

So I'm thinking of this guy as I'm crossing the street on campus. I'm thinking about the serendipitous events (or luck) of getting the Jeep sold, out of our hair, saving us money, and being alleviated of these bills. I'm thinking this was a good thing that happened for us. I'm thinking how Carey said the guy got a good deal, knows he's getting this good deal and how I am happy and pleased that he got his good deal. As I was walking I wondered if he was the kind of guy who gets lucky with things in life often. If he's good to people and so gets treated well in return. I wonder if he is used to getting good deals.

I'm walking and considering this. I'm approaching a woman on the sidewalk who seems to be a young mother escorting her two daughters into the athletic center where I imagine they will be attending their weekly gymnastics lessons, or swim meet, or something else along those lines. Daughter A, who is maybe eleven years old, is dancing up ahead of her mother and sister, B. A is looking to me like she's amped up. She's hyper, as a lot of eleven year old girls, I would imagine, are. She's dancing, and skipping and twirling and singing a good ten paces ahead of Mother and B. B, on the other hand, is tired. She seems so, anyway. She is holding back, not dancing or singing, but leaning in to her mother, mothers right arm cradling her in comfort. They are walking slowly. I hear Mother, possibly, consoling her daughter, saying something nice to her, something encouraging. Perhaps B was not in any state to be entering into yet another session of high-diving, treading water, flipping on the floor mats, balancing on the balance beam. It seemed to me that B was just plain old tired. I was tired, too. I bet Mother would have taken a nap if one was offered her. A, however, was like Man O'War on Red Bull.

Just as I was passing the threesome to their right, I witnessed A take note that Mother and B were coming to some conclusion. A stopped in mid plies, turned around, and walked hurriedly back to her sister. She took her sister's hands and said this: Let's transfer some energy.

A, with all her pent up activity, knew that her sister, B, was not feeling up to par, and it was generally agreed upon, complete with Mother's encouragement, that not only should they try this remedy, but that, for them, it was proven to work.

Hold your sister's hand and close your eyes until you get to the door: Mother said, arm still around B's shoulder. You have to think about it, she said, you have to want it to happen. By then I was too far past the family to hear anymore conversation. I started thinking about this family and how they'd probably learned this at some point: energy transference, and that they'd been practicing it when needed from time to time. This being one of those times.

When I got home I told Carey about Mother, A, and B and what I'd heard them say and how it made me think about energy transference and the internet and how I usually felt after sitting at the connected computer for so many hours. I usually felt oddly energized, sitting there at the keyboard. I also felt slightly dazed, and somewhat disoriented. But neither of these latter two symptoms ever arose in a computing session until after I got up from the machine, until after I was no longer connected. I wondered, I told her, if the internet was possibly transferring more than just data. I wondered if the internet could be sending and receiving not only electronic energy, but life energy the same way that a sister in high spirits can uplift her downtrodden sibling.

In Buddhist philosophy, Carey informed me, the transference of life energy from one person to another is called Tonglen. For many, it's been known to work. Tonglen, transferring energy, has been a practiced methodology of human compassion for thousands of years. Most of the people in Asia, it turns out, would look at you funny if you believed that this DIDN'T work. McLuhan said that media are simply an extension of ourselves. What if the internet is allowing for global, long-distance Tonglen. This would be Tonglen on a massive, massive scale. Potential energy transference from 888 million people. It would be a secondary symptom of the network, a use that was never planned for but yet came out of the completion of the system. What if the internet is transferring life energy, as well as jpgs, and we just don't yet know it?