



City Room



May 26, 2010, 12:09 PM

Of Spreadsheets, Hipster Lawsuits and Ivanka Trump

By J. DAVID GOODMAN

In the modern American technocracy, he who wields the spreadsheet is king.

And so it is that Charles Komanoff — transit analyst, former Transportation Alternatives president and [calculator of cycling numbers](#) — approaches the intractable problem of traffic in the city: with a spreadsheet so huge, it gets its own profile in [June issue of Wired](#).

(Perhaps the new [Park Slope Parents blog](#) should encourage Excel lessons as part of “the Magic of Special Time”?)

According to the Wired profile, by the [Reuters celebri-blogger Felix Salmon](#):

Over the course of about 50 worksheets, [the spreadsheet] breaks down every aspect of New York City transportation — subway revenues, traffic jams, noise pollution — in an attempt to discover which mix of tolls and surcharges would create the greatest benefit for the largest number of people.

In case it wasn't clear, the goal is congestion pricing, an issue that, [like the debate over term limits](#), never really went away. Mr. Komanoff gamely allows readers to download his unwieldy document, called the “[Balanced Transportation Analyzer](#)” (xls), and test out his numbers.

What he comes up with is a plan more complicated — and perhaps more fair — than a simple toll, one that would vary depending on the time of day: \$9 to enter downtown in the morning or evening rush, \$6 during the day and \$3 on weeknights. The train would also be subject to discounts for off-peak riders, with \$2 as the top fare, and the bus would be free, he recommends.

Elsewhere in the world of city transportation, Lev Radin, one of a small but dedicated group of MetroCard collectors, has [mounted an online effort](#) in January to catalog every iteration of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's little bendable cards (he has about 600 images on the site now). Even if some of those may have [best been left to pass into history](#). The cards also decorate his Bronx apartment in what he called his “artwork collection” in an [interview with The Times](#) in 2008.

While some have taken to [making art out of the MetroCard](#), Mr. Radin appears to appreciate the prefabricated beauty of its design. His opinion is not universal, however; others have said the cards look “[elementary](#)” and “[horrible](#).”

Above ground, [Bike Blog NYC](#) points to an [amusing segment on “Judge Judy”](#) involving two Brooklyn hipster bicycle messengers and one bike theft. (There is also the requisite burned mattress.) Judge Judy is skeptical that a bike could cost as much as the pair insist their pricey frames and components are worth. (She is presumably aware of the markup on mattresses.)



Outside an actual house of the law, [Courthouse Confessions](#) — not to be confused with our own [Courthouse Confidential](#) — captures another bizarre case of aggravated hipsterism: a 28-year-old man [charged with stalking Ivanka Trump online](#). “Basically, I was sending some Tвитters and e-mails, dude,” he apparently said on exiting the courthouse. “I didn't picture being here, celebrity stalking, at 28, you know? That's not what you dream of as a kid. I figured I'd be big-time money, running the city, dude. Just chalk it up as a bad year.”

Around the Web from link to link; today's chatter in the New York City blogosphere. Have a tip? E-mail [NewYorkOnline@nytimes.com](#) or send a Twitter message to [@javidgoodman](#).

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as an owner-operator of a truck delivery service, I question what alternative there is to trucks in Manhattan? This is largely the only method of delivery and disposal available into and out of the island. Yet, we are grouped with 'alternatives' - as if there were another option. There are ways to perhaps lower the tonnage and number of individual deliveries, but the vast majority of truck deliveries and pick-ups are not optional. My point is, why should truck owners and drivers be subject to increased rates of tolls, licensing and fines along with drivers with 'alternatives'?

- Wesley Dumont
- May 26, 2010 2:30 pm

Link

hipster trash...

- stressed desserts
- May 26, 2010 4:41 pm

Link

@Wesley - Trucks are necessary, but that doesn't mean they can't operate more efficiently in Manhattan or they shouldn't be subject to congestion pricing. If the plans proposed in the spreadsheet reduce overall congestion, wouldn't that increase driver productivity and possibly reduce fuel costs due to traffic idling? How much is that worth to ya? And if there's a sliding scale based on tonnage, wouldn't the reduction in mammoth trucks further boost efficiency by freeing up road space and reducing fuel costs? Why do trucks operating solely in NYC have to be the same large models used in the suburbs or interstate highways, when other cities get by perfectly well with trucks specifically designed for narrower urban streets and tight corners?

- WZ

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Comments of the Moment

- “Q: What’s a hipster’s favorite beer? A: YOU DON’T KNOW????????!!!!!!”

- Joe Nocturnalist | Battle of the Beers
- “Hold on one minute... \$15,000 for essentially a Twitter and Facebook outreach? You have to be kidding me!”

- david What Should @NYC Tell You?
- “We complain about faceless bureaucracy—often rightly so. We should not then complain when leaders try to address the legacy of poor public communication.”

- Preston What Should @NYC Tell You?
- “I have lived here since 1980 and I kind of liked the parking lots. The low rise quality of the area in the midst of the whirl of gentrifying sliver condos.”

- bignybugs Panel Backs Plan to Develop Site on Lower East Side

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- Electric Literature
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- The Moment
- The New York Public Library
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- Time Out New York
- Urban Baby (N.Y.)
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- Brownstoner
- Business of Green
- Craig's New York Business
- Curbed
- Dealbook
- Dealbreaker
- Floyd Norris
- Freakonomics

- Media Decoder
- New York Observer - Real Estate
- NYConvergence
- Rackless
- Restaurant Inspections
- The Architect's Newspaper
- The Consumerist
- The Media Mob
- The Neighborhood Retail Alliance
- The Real Deal
- Women's Wear Daily

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- 82Y Blog
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- Gothamist
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- Jeremiah's Vanishing New York
- Lost City
- Manhattan User's Guide

- Mr. Beller's Neighborhood
- Municipal Art Society
- New York Today
- Object Lessons
- outside in New York
- Rackaronline
- Smith
- The Lede
- The New Yorker
- Urban Mindfulness

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

- Ben Smith
- Capitol Confidential
- Changing the Court
- CityHallNews.com
- Community-Based Planning
- Data Detectives
- Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn
- DM Blog
- Empire Center
- In Case of Emergency
- Joshing Politics
- Maggie Haberman on New York
- Manhattan Young Democrats
- Mouth of the Potomac
- N.Y.P.D. Confidential
- New York City Government
- New York Civic
- New York State Government

- Newark06 (Archive)
- noLandGrab
- Pollicio
- Politics on the Hudson
- Ragdoll Treats
- ReformNY
- Room Eight
- Serf City
- Simply Left Behind
- The Agenda
- The Albany Project
- Parlour Me for Asting
- Pistols and Popcorn
- The Daily Politics
- The Empire Zone (Archive)
- The Opinionator
- The Pollticker
- The Workster

LOCAL HISTORY

- Brooklyn Revealed
- Ephemeral New York
- Inside the Apple

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- 1010 WINS
- amNew York
- Bronx News
- Brooklyn Daily Eagle
- Brooklyn the Borough
- Chelsea Now
- City Limits
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- DNAinfo
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- Metro
- Metropolis
- New York City News Service
- New York Press

- Newsday
- NYI News
- NYC The Blog
- Rockaway.com
- SLive.com
- The Brooklyn Paper
- The Daily Intelligencer
- The Daily News
- The New York Observer
- The New York Post
- The New York Sun
- The Riverdale Press
- The Villager
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- Sheephead Bites
- StreetsBlog
- Staten Island Dump
- Sustainable Flatbush
- The Brooklyn Rail
- The Halku Diaries
- The Lo-Down
- The Local - East Village
- The Local - Fort Greene / Clinton Hill
- The Luna Park Gazette
- The Origin of Species
- The Streets File
- The Ward Where We Live
- The Word on Columbia Street
- Ligtown Flavor
- Washington Sq. Park
- Who Walk in Brooklyn
- Yorkville: Sloops to Nuts

SCHOOLS

- Campaign for Fiscal Equity
- Chronicle of Higher Education
- City Department of Education
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- Columbia Daily Spectator
- Education Notes Online
- Edwize
- Gottham Schools
- Inside Higher Ed
- InsideSchools.org

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- NYC Educator
- NYC Private Schools Blog
- NYC Public School Parents
- NYU Local
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- Second Avenue Sagas

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