

The Klitschkos Don't Have To Acquiesce To Networks Or Promoters

Written by Frank Lotierzo

Sunday, 06 March 2011 14:24



It's rare, but interesting to watch what happens when the balance of power shifts over to fighters, away from the networks or promoters. And that's what has happened over the last decade in regards to the way Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko have navigated their careers.

It's no secret to anyone who follows professional boxing, especially the heavyweight division, that Wladimir 55-3 (49) and Vitali Klitschko 41-2 (38) have dominated the heavyweight division since former champ Lennox Lewis announced his retirement one year after he defeated Vitali in his last fight. And if you're honest and shed your bias, Wladimir hasn't been close to losing since he lost to Lamon Brewster back in April of 2004 (except for a brief scare versus Samuel Peter in their first fight), and Vitali has virtually won every round he's fought since he lost to Lewis in 2003.

Yet for some reason it's hard to find their fights broadcast when they defend their titles. Why is that? Is it because they're usually one sided? Or, is it because they're usually not that exciting and the network of champions can't control them and who they fight. If title bouts involving Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko aren't shown on HBO because they don't make for very exciting fights, many have short memories.

Muhammad Ali was a great showman and fighter, but how many of his bouts excluding the ones against Joe Frazier and George Foreman were actually exciting? Ali's athleticism was a thing of beauty to watch, but in reality he only showed up in great shape and fought like he had an interest in the outcome of the fight when he was confronted by a fighter who was a legitimate threat to beat him. How many of those fighters were around in the sixties and seventies not named Liston, Frazier or Foreman?

Larry Holmes was a great and fundamentally sound boxer who fought everyone of his era. Again, I ask, how many of his fights were non-stop back and forth action excluding his bouts versus Ken Norton, Mike Weaver and Tim Witherspoon. Yet many of Holmes' title defenses were aired on HBO in the eighties. Personally, I'd also like to include Mike Tyson amongst this group, because to me his fights weren't exciting. Most of them were against over-matched foes who were has beens or journeymen. Mike either destroyed inferior opposition or struggled and lost to many of the fighters who weren't intimidated by him. However, I'm well aware that the public loves quick knockouts, regardless of who the mid-level fighter is getting knocked out. And

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Mike certainly provided many of those nights for boxing fans.

One of the big differences between the title reigns of Muhammad Ali and Larry Holmes and the Klitschkos is, Wladimir and Vitali are challenged less during their bouts. And a lot of that is because the heavyweight division is more pedestrian today than it has been in years. In addition to that, the Klitschko brothers are extremely big and know how to use their size and fight tall. Other than that, there's not much difference. Ali and Holmes were dominant champions and a majority of their title defenses aired on American television, something that's not the case with the Klitschko's.

Why aren't the title defenses of either Wladimir or Vitali Klitschko broadcast by HBO anymore? Personally, I believe a lot of that has to do with the fact that they're not American. But even more than that I believe a lot of it has to do with the brothers having other options. Wladimir and Vitali are different than other fighters. They can fight in Germany against any contender and sell out a 50,000 seat venue. Therefore they don't have to beg and accept HBO's terms, and no doubt the non-boxing suits at HBO find fault with that.

The brothers have their own promotion company and can keep most of the money. Again, not many fighters in the history of boxing have held that latitude. In regards to the Klitschko brothers, HBO and Showtime aren't the only games in town. Everyone knows that the few networks who do broadcast boxing aren't used to fighters having that type of leverage.

Is there a morsel of a doubt in anyone's mind that if the Klitschkos were American and capitulated to HBO and their editorial decisions, that we'd be told by Lampley, Merchant and Kellerman just how great and dominant they were every time they fought? There's no doubt in my mind that that's what we'd be hearing.

In the United States, Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko are considered boring and safety first fighters. And because of that mindset, their fights don't create much, if any, buzz in America when they fight. But they just keep winning. Instead of them getting credit when they win, it's usually said afterward that it was more because of their opponents' ineptness as to why they won as opposed to their skill set and fighting ability. However, they've cleaned out the division and every other past champ who went through the division during their era got credit for that. During the eighties everyone said Holmes and Tyson often faced limited opposition. And did Rocky Marciano dominate a great heavyweight division during the early to mid fifties? No, he just beat everybody who was there like both Klitschkos have done.

The Klitschkos own Europe and aren't seen as boring at all. American fans should remember that, over there, fans are trained to watch differently. Which is why fighters like Henry Maske or Sven Ottke had enormous fan bases. In fact, until people started to figure out just how good he was, Joe Calzaghe was tarred with the same brush.

Regardless of how one views the Klitschkos, they've had an incredible run and have had the final say in the heavyweight division for seven plus years. On top of that they've had a big say over their careers and haven't had to acquiesce to any promoter or network. How many past heavyweight champs can say that?

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mortcola says:

Brilliant and balanced, Frank. There's a lot of interesting social psychology stuff in there. One reason people think the K's are boring is this twisted reasoning: They are not shown, nor promoted, in the US, so they must not be interesting - in this hype-hungry side of the world. Another is that, since they are not "one of us", we can't IDENTIFY with their dominance. They become the enemy, someone we refuse to appreciate because us-vs-them trumps all other ways of thinking. This is made worse by the fact that "our guy" keeps getting made to look incompetent - so, we can be resentful that we have no one to cheer for - pretty depressing - while having the additional ammunition against the Klitschkos that "they've fought nobodys", when in fact they have fought everybody and either completely dominated them, or been beaten but then come back and avenged the loss violently. That last point could make them American-friendly, because we just looooooove to put losers back on their pedestals once they come back and do OK - or better than OK. Then, add to that the other reasons why they are not one of us - they are educated, they run their own show promotionally without being at a financial, intellectual, or business-acumen disadvantage; they are also associated with commie-land (even though Ukraine has a whole separate history) and Ivan Drago - big white genetic-technological experiments-by-association, who make our poor white, black, and Latin homegrown look malnourished and feeble. All this in spite of - or compounded by - the fact that they are usually nice, soft-spoken fighters who speak more fluently in their FOURTH language than many of us do in our ONLY language. They don't engage in blood and guts Gatti-style warfare, the kind we supposedly love, but they still have between them an extraordinary KO percentage. They fight cool, but beat the other guy to a pulp. And now Wlad has a pretty blonde TV girlfriend, and Vitali's is gorgeous and well decked out. Gotta hate 'em. If they make you feel inferior, that is. But gotta get past the bias. They rule the ring, they come back after losses and dominate, and if we're lucky, they do something boring so we can demonize them some more. Sometimes it sucks when the facts get in the way of passionate stupidity. Passionate stupidity is more fun.

the Roast says:

Very well said Mortcola.

Radam G says:

Wow! In this new version of TSSU, TSS archmasterweaving scribes has been spittin' out copy that will make you riff [boxin' Hip-Hop slanguage meaning to expound on a subject]. Let me get straight metaphoric FROM THE JUMP! Because the K-Bros/Docs' fanfaronades are going to come right for my grinning, shinny GRILL. [Da suckas ain't dentists, but dey be tryin' to get on their drill straight-up my darn grill. Hehehehehe! But it's all good! I'm havin' a soft skills thrill,

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BABBBBEEEEEE!]

A body can survive without the two-some or oneness of eyes, legs, arms, and it can do fine with just one lung and kidney. Da sucka can even survive with one or no arse cheeks, or testes, or your whole cojones. Hehehehehehehehehe, Imfao! The K-Bros/Docs aren't running JACK! True boxing game, da bros/docs LACK! Since the WHOLE of BOXING is a body: the pugilists are like the various types of muscles; the promoters are the various types of arteries, chambers and veins going to/from and are in the heart; and the media are the various types of neurons, dendrites and particles in and are feeding and operating the full brain, which when it is healthy, it ignites buzzes to the fine mind to create attractive, irresistible scenarios like drinking fine wine.

One's biological body cannot stay in this life too long without functioning muscles, a heart or a brain. But even with the worst eyes, legs, arms, cojones and one lung and kidney, the body can stay around. The K-Bros/Docs are the eyes, legs, arms, lungs, kidney and weak cojones of boxing. Hehehehehe! This is why boxing survives, inspite of not givin' 'em da luv. The lower divisions are the strong muscles, the promoters are the strong arteries, chambers and veins in the heart and the media are the neurons, dendrites and particles. Never mind the sorry-arse K-bros/docs and their weak division. The U.S. American media game was aight for dropping the U brothers. They can take their boring styles of pugilism back to the Ukrainian Republic. For their no-game pugilism make us -- REAL BOXERS and EXs -- U-cranky like disgusted muthasuckas. Why is their fellow citizen/boxer -- prospect Ismayl Syllakh -- so exciting? He musta' fo'got da memo for being boring and lally-gagging through bouts.

Give me a BREAK! OOPS! I musta fo'got dat is what da K-bros/docs' bodies do. Especially if you put vaseline jelly on lil Bro/Doc WK, and if Big Bro/Doc forgets to wash his hands in his toddler's son's peepee and put a bit on the hand wraps. Hehehehehehe! Boxing is so indeed most a misunderstood magic act anyway. And people are always trying to put in in a box. YOU CAN'T! The game is a craft that is full of optical illusions. The whole NINE of the hurt bitnezz involves the combination punches of the fighters, media outlets and networks and promoters. One cannot make it being a darn, lone WOLF. DON'T Believe the HYPE. In 1908, Tex Rickard needed the boxing scribes to build up and then legend up Jack Johnson and Jim Jeffries. In the 1920s, "the golden-age" of the game needed films to show the world that "Long-count" beatdown that Tunney conducted on Dempsey. In the 1930s, the scribes, talking heads and boxing all needed each other for the free world to show Hilter that race superiority was bunk because da "Brown Bomber" was the USA and free world's master-HUNK! Let me just cut to the chase and go up in time. The K-bros/docs -- no fault of their own -- are BUMS! For the human psyche sees natural talent, poetry, art and a good rap; no matter what the nowadays talking heads and fanfaronades say and keyboard tappers and quasi-expert fans tap.

GOAT Muhammad Ali, Larry [so contrary] Holmes, Smokin' Joe Frazier, Big (Rev) George Foreman, Ken Norton, Mike Weaver and Time Witherspoon had the IT FACTOR that fed the human psyche and soul. They brought excitment to boxing even in fighting tomato cans and stiffs in a type of boring excitement. [There is such.] These tomato cans and stiffs fought adroitly the best they that could. The K-bros/docs fight quitters and sitters. Their fault or not! That is just the way the lionless, quietly punk roars. No excuses for the K-bros/docs, they are simply bottom

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class with some classless fighting fatties and tallies in the weakest division of all times. Maybe 10 percent of it is their faults. Rocky Marciano era was full oldies and bum opponents but he kept his IT FACTOR and Da SWAG. Larry "Loud mouth, but could fight a 100 times better than da Klits" Holmes also had a weak era but it was an EVENT around the world whenever he FOUGHT. Jack Dempsey, Sonny Liston, the young George Foreman the young "Iron Mike Tyson would end bouts in two or three rounds and still the fans would come a running, radio listening and film and/or cable watching from around the globe.

Largely the only excitement when the K-bros/docs get jiggy with it is in Germany. These suckas are not even that popular in their birth place of Ukrainia. Boxing is not loving sport, especially when you don't bring excitement. Again, WORD! The K-bros/docs own Germany, not the whole of Europe. Somebodyee oughta holla at half of Great Britian, all the French, the Italians, the Swiss, the Norwegians, the Turks and a few other European locales. Travel in real space to the whole Europe or in cyberspace, and you will not hear the names of Doctors WK and VK, except by diehard fans. Nor will see you a lot of interest in them. The whole world has changed and gotten smaller. If only by cyberspace sites of Facebook and Twitter. Dude are not LARGE, except but in size. Holla!

mortcola says:

Radam....you're talking about persona and poetry. And part of those subjective things is competition. But, having read a lot of your Pinoy beat poetry these last few years, I think maybe too much extra-sharp durian smoothy is making you maybe a little too fuzzy-sweet about the past, and maybe sweet on untapped potential. Tim fraggin-WITHERSPOON??????????????? Sorry to yell. Yes, there is an element of epic rivalry missing, a round robin of complementary greats and goods and underdogs back in the seventies; at least the 80s had personalities, as well as guys with good jabs and big-boy-boobies who would regularly lose to one another in stinkfests, while bad-mouthing Larry Holmes. But you're preferring the poetic and mythic over the factual. Your ranking of the Klitschkos beneath their forebears is all supposition. They don't get you groovin'. They make you feel emotionally deprived. But I say, with arguably as much boxing know-how, history, and experience as you (maybe more....I don't know you well enough), to say, with equal conviction, that, putting epic poetry aside, Drs. W and V would have been dominant or near-dominant in any era of history. Don't ever stop the poetry. But don't mistake it for the single source of truth. That lady deceives as much as she pleases.

mortcola says:

by untapped potential, I'm referring to the buzz about a new guy who hasn't had the chance to disappoint yet, like Ismayl. I distinctly remember the buzz about iron-giants ready to break all challengers, these 6 foot 13 inch cruel giants with skill and lethal power. Then they didn't give you the buzz, so you riff on history, tossing magic Dempsey-dust over the flawed greats and almosts of the the past, concocting clever but confused criticisms to justify the lack of Ecstasy-love you get from the Brothers K. Sure, maybe something's missing. But it ain't their ability to dominate the heavyweight division for years and years.

the Roast says:

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There you have it folks. The King of heavyweight boxing has spoken! Looks like you are doing very well for yourself away from the keyboard as well Mort!

mortcola says:

Yeah. My skill with Photoshop.

Radam G says:

I understand your luv for your boys. But heavyweight was once just over 175lbs. The K-bros/docs dominate fatties and bad-balance giants -- not the great, legit-sized, superbad, great balance heavies such as in the eras of the John L Sullivans, Jack Johnsons, Jack Dempseys, Joe Louises, Rocky Marcianos, Sonny Listons, Joe Fraziers, Muhammad Alis, George Foremans, Larry Holmeses, Mike Tysons and Lennox Lewises or the prime and slightly-past-his-prime Evander Holyfields. No way could the K-bros/docs last in the ring with the adroitly, sneaky 185lbs to 215lbs heavies of yesteryears. I cannot possible see how either brother even beat very good heavyweight contenders like Gerry Cooney and even Tyrell Biggs. C'mon, mortcola, I know that you can see how the game has changed. [Even in amateur boxing, a heavyweight above 6-foot-5 and 230lbs couldn't even win a gold medal in the Olympics. And the reason that they can now is because of that stupid computer scoring, where Doc Wlad was able to win by running.] In the whole, big ole world, the mostly deadly men are between 100lbs to 225lbs and 5-foot-3 and 6-foot-4. Every single country of the world special forces and astronauts are this size.

It very, very rare for human over that size of the nowadays fatties and tallies in the heavyweight division to have great balance and coordination. The K-bros/docs benefit from a very, very weak division that was moved upward by 25lbs to give overgrown pugilists a shot, and to give alphabet sanctioning organizations more moola for sanctioning fights that one could only see at circus and freak shows back in the day. Wilt Chamberlin's father would not let Wilt "The Silk" be a freak fight for GOAT Ali. The WBCs, WBAs, WBOs and IBFs have since just made up a scheme division to separate fanfaronades of their bucks. I have no doubt that if David "Hayemaker" Haye has just an iota of courage and side-to-side movement, he'll kayo Doc Wlad in eight rounds or less. We'll have a chance to see this. The word from the boxing grapevine is that the contract to rumble have been signed. If either one of these bros/docs would have had to fight about 10 to 15 adroitly, quick, hard-charging-and-punching pugilists of 190lbs to 225lbs and 5-foot-10 to 6-foot-4, their careers would have been over in about five years. And you know that. Just look at how many times the brothers/doctors have already been injured by fighting nowadays quitters and sitters. In the mid-1970s to about 1994, I would see small heavies who could destroy these nowadays fatties and giants ninety-five percent of the time. The other five percent of the time, the small heavies was out of shape or had Mike Tyson-like mental focus problems. This is my last post on this subject of sorry-arse heavies and Klits. I'm getting depressed just thinking how they are perpretrating a fraud. And a lot of people are buying it. But once again, the Hayemaker has the chance to bring it to one amazing halt. Holla!

mortcola says:

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I just think you underestimate their skills, Radam. And what it has taken them to stay at the top of their game for so long. We'll never know about the historical match-ups, no time machine. And over-glamorize the days when boxing was fresh for you. My father used to criticize Ali, but laud Benny Leonard, Barney Ross, SRR, and Joe Louis. And then got excited again when Marvin Hagler and then Roy Jones came along, like they woke up something in him. Yes, I agree that the division is weak. But it has had many weak eras, and the best of their time were great in part because of the consistency and variety in the way they handled all comers. Holmes' struggles against Carl the Truth, Renaldo Snipes and Tim Witherspoon proved that even in a weak era there were flawed but dangerous fighters, that it wasn't just a cakewalk. But no one - NO ONE - has dominated their particular version of the division so one-sidedly in decades. The what-if comes down to imagination. I see them being near the top in any era, though maybe among peers rather than inferiors in the 70s. Do I think any short, 202 pound heavys of the past would have gotten past their defense, versatility, and power? Not really. Would Wlad's chin have held up if 185 lb Dempsey hit him? No basis for comparison. Imagination, friend. I weigh the facts differently than you. That's all. And, yes, I miss the old days too. Maybe boxing just isn't fresh anymore once you push 50.

mortcola says:

Oh....remember what quick Tillis and Tony Tucker were able to do to prime Tyson? Bothered him silly; what the Riddick Bowe who proved the heart of Evander did to The Real Deal; good balance Evander could be very, very predictable. Would Sonny Liston, all 6'2" of him, been so dominant against guys he would struggle to touch, who were stronger than him and hit at least as hard? See, as great as those guys were, they were flawed, but they have also been made into legends. The facts tell something else. The game HAS changed, but so has our ability to love it, or its ability to get us excited. Your argument still depends on ignoring the skills and intangibles of the K-bros, suggesting that they aren't real because of their era...and that "because" is where it falls apart. I see the fullness of their game, and I say, what a damn shame we can't see them against better fighters BECAUSE the skills are great, the size and intelligence formidable. Everybody has a weakness, and someone can exploit it; Ali never matched up well with Norton, or anyone who could come up and under, make him overly rely on the back foot. Tyson could be jabbed silly and nailed with the uppercut - Tucker and Bruno did it, and eventually (Douglas, Holyfield, and Lewis, after the loss of discipline and method) that became his most easily exploited weakness. We won't see the K's properly tested. But in the absence of any better science, we fall back on our beliefs. I believe that I see great heavies who deserve a better era. You believe they are frauds. We both know boxing, I think.

Condor says:

The Klitschkos are the most dominant fighters in all of boxing, and have been for years. How many [I]rounds[/I] have they lost over the last 5 years? The distance between the Klitschkos and their competition is greater than that of anyone else. That's the definition of P4P, and both of these guys belong at the top. I've been watching and following heavyweight boxing since the 70's, and every era, without exception, is maligned by fans and pundits during that era. It happened in the 70's, 80's, 90's, and the 2000's. This is nothing new. If the K's were as awful as they're depicted, they wouldn't have ruled the division the way they have. They aren't one hit

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wonders; no, their respective sample size is more than adequate, and they just keep winning -by landslides. If they were that bad, wouldn't SOMEONE be slightly motivated to become the heavyweight champion of the world? After all, being the heavyweight champion ain't bad for a resume and bank account. I just don't get the K venom. What did Shannon Briggs say after Vitali literally broke his face? He said that VK was the best he's ever faced.

brownsugar says:

WTF!!!!...wow everybody's waxing so eloquently today... and WTF is "The Rabbit Hole",.. I'm watching "Big Mama 3".....am I gonna have to get degree in literature and the ARTs and Sciences just to leave post on this site??... Ill tell you why the K bothers don't have to acquiesce to the networks... as Dave Chappelle would say... IT'S BECAUSE THEY'RE RIYACH BIYATCH!!!. I envited a few friends to watch Vlad online, I paid \$15 for the fight... think it was Tony Thompson... after 2 rounds everybody literally got up and left...I had to watch the fight by myself... never had that happen before. Been watching the K brothers in the closet ever since(I don't even tell my friends that I watch their fights). I appreciate the K brothers... but like everybody else I'm looking for a change... somebody... anybody... I guarantee that Solis will be the first boxer to give Vitali a good fight in a very long time... can't call a winner yet.. but this will be a heavyweight fight that even the K haters will want to watch... Also there's some great talent just under the radar... like David Price of britton 6'8"... bronze medalist... still in his professional embryotic stage... currently sparring with Solis... and several others that I'll mention later...But thank God new talent is finally on the horizon... the Kbrothers strangle hold on the heavyweight division is going to end sooner than we know... But at least they did the world of favor by getting rid of the Rahman's, Johnson's, Thompson's, Peters and a whole slew of bums who were cluttering up the division anyway.. now watch as the cream begins to rise.

the Roast says:

Wooooo! That is some good stuff up there! Like back in the pld TSS. Now we aare getting somewhere. I cant wax it like that, so I will know my role and stick with the jokes. @B-Sug, The rabbit hole refers to Alice in Wonderland. Alice fell down a rabbit hole and into a crazy world. The world has changed. The heavyweights have changed. Back in the '90s, when I was telling everyone how great Evarder Holyfield was, I was told that tthe '90s was the weakest era in history. Alot of this kind of thinking depends on when we grew up. When we were most impressionable. People have the same arguement about music. I was reading the lates Ring Magazine, does anyone still read that? I know they read us, Ring is always taking shots at us "keyboard tappers", anyway there is a photo from the Holmes-Truth Williams fight. Young Truth looked very small. I hope Solis or Hays can provide a test to the Klit bros. Maybe rise from a knockdown or fight through a cut. Any test will do. Now back to jokes about Tim Bradley's head. So Tim Bradley walks into a bar. BOOM! splits open the bar's eyebrow!

brownsugar says:

Yeah Roast,... a some excellent and well balanced contributions on the K debate.. especially from Mort... and thanks for explanation of the Rabbit Hole... I like your definition better but I think Fe'Roz was using the critically acclaimed movie "The Rabbit Hole" which features a lot of

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subtle nuances character portrayals and sublime pacing as an analogy for what's good,.. vs.. what people really want. I was just taking a cheap satirical swipe at Fe'Roz since I didn't have anything better to say. But I will say this... Vitali was in a life and death war with an overweight Lewis 6 years ago when he was still in his prime... but today at nearly 40 year old Vitali literally walks thru opponents as if they're just zombies waiting to get their heads chopped off... to me that's not an indictment against the K brothers,.. it's an indictment against current generation of abysmal heavyweights... it's scary to think that Lewis was the last heavyweight on the planet capable of giving either brother a decent fight. But carry on with the discussion... I want to hear more

the Roast says:

Oh, Ok. I figured you must know about Alice, or at least seen the porn version. It that one Alice falls in to a slightly different hole and, well this is a family site. HEY, I just noticed that Maria eating that banana kind of looks like....

brownsugar says:

you're ever the voice of wisdom Roast.

Condor says:

"No offense ... but Shannon Briggs never even fought a good nevertheless great heavyweight"

I respectfully disagree. Briggs fought Lennox Lewis and George Foreman. He also has fought professionally for nearly 20 years and has won more than 50 fights. He's a very real, genuine heavyweight fighter.

My point is the planet is a very big place, and the population is enormous. If these guys were as pitiful as they're depicted, someone, even by accident, would have dethroned them recently. Being the heavyweight champion is still a notable accomplishment in life, and someone would have seized the day (if it was THAT easy).

I agree with Roast and remember the talk in the 90's of how putrid it was. In retrospect, and with time, it is now considered a very deep and excellent era.

Personally, I am very neutral with regard to the K's. I'd like to see Solis pull it off, as he'd bring a breath of fresh air to the division and it's always nice to see an underdog prevail. But I think their greatness is simply indisputable (these guys are doing to their competition what Tiger Woods was doing to his competition before the fall; just pure dominance).

the Roast says:

Sug, if I the voice of wisdom we are all in big trouble. There is a good article in the latest Ring Magazine about this topic written by our own Eric Raskin.