

Analysis of writing style and suitable venues for “BIG BLUE KNEECAPS THE FRUIT: IBM’s Calculated PC Play”

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Hoisting the LLM’s summary to the top for convenience: “This article is a well-written, thought-provoking piece that challenges conventional wisdom about the rise of the personal computer. Its unconventional presentation, strong authorial voice, and strategic focus make it a compelling read. The author’s analysis of IBM’s strategic moves is particularly insightful and would be of interest to a wide range of readers in both the business and technology communities.”

How to reproduce this editor-focused analysis: Replace the reader-focused LLM prompt at the end of the article with the prompt below and submit the entire text to an LLM such Google Gemini. See *ibmapple,article.md* in this directory.

LLM prompt:

- Analyze the writing style of this article.
- Analyze the use of emphasis formatting like bolding and italics in this markdown-formatted article.
- Analyze ways in which this article’s **presentation** is unconventional. This article is meant to be submitted to the opinion pages of business-news outlets such as Bloomberg, Wall Street Journal, CNN etc or as a long-form magazine piece to outlets such as the New Yorker.
- Analyze business news outputs outlets to submit this article which would be a good match. Consider print, television, cable, and science outlets. Do not ignore outlets such as “IEEE Micro”, “IEEE Spectrum” and their ACM equivalents.

LLM Response:

Okay, let’s break down this article.

Analysis of Writing Style

- **Direct and Assertive:** The author uses a very direct and assertive tone. There’s a lack of hedging or qualifiers. Statements are presented as facts, often with a strong opinion woven in. This creates a sense of confidence and authority, even when presenting a contrarian viewpoint.
- **Contrarian and Provocative:** The article deliberately challenges conventional wisdom. The author positions their interpretation of events as a more accurate and insightful one, which immediately makes it engaging. Phrases like “That misses the point” and “The conventional wisdom is…” are used to set up the counter-argument.
- **Informal and Conversational:** Despite the technical subject matter, the writing is relatively informal and conversational. The use of phrases like “kneecap,” “raking in the money,” and “bet-the-farm” adds a colloquial feel. This makes the article more accessible and less dry than a typical business analysis.
- **Narrative-Driven:** The article is structured as a story, with a clear beginning, middle, and end. This helps to engage the reader and make the complex historical events more relatable. The author also includes personal anecdotes (“My journey into software engineering…”) which further humanizes the piece.
- **Use of Analogies and Metaphors:** The author uses analogies and metaphors to explain complex concepts. For example, “commoditize your opponent” is a powerful metaphor that simplifies a complicated business strategy.

- **Technical Jargon Interspersed:** The author does not shy away from technical terms, such as “ISA bus,” “MDA,” “CGA,” “mainframe,” and “proprietary architecture.” However, these terms are used in a way that is accessible to a reasonably informed reader, and they add credibility to the author’s analysis.
- **Self-Aware and Meta:** The author includes a disclaimer at the start, acknowledging the unconventional nature of the piece. This self-awareness adds a layer of sophistication and makes the article more intriguing. The “Rebuttals Acknowledged” section also demonstrates a willingness to engage with criticism and further strengthens the author’s position.

Analysis of Emphasis Formatting

- **Bold Text:** Bold text is used extensively to highlight key points, arguments, and phrases. This makes it easy for the reader to skim the article and grasp the main ideas. The bolding is used to emphasize the author’s main points, not just to highlight important facts.
- **Italics:** Italics are used more sparingly, primarily for emphasis and to introduce specific terms or phrases. This helps to distinguish these elements from the main text.
- **Strategic Use of Emphasis:** The use of bold and italics is not random. It is used to create a sense of pacing and rhythm, guiding the reader through the author’s argument. The emphasis is used to reinforce the author’s contrarian viewpoint.

Analysis of Unconventional Presentation

- **Disclaimer:** The opening disclaimer is highly unusual for a business article. It sets the tone for the piece and signals to the reader that this will not be a conventional analysis.
- **Contrarian Viewpoint:** The article’s central thesis is a contrarian one, which is not typical for business analysis. Most articles would focus on the reasons for IBM’s failure to capitalize on the PC market, not on its strategic success in kneecapping Apple.
- **Use of Strong Language:** The use of strong language, such as “ruthlessly,” “kneecap,” and “wilderness,” is not typical for business writing. This adds a sense of drama and urgency to the piece.
- **Personal Anecdotes:** The inclusion of personal anecdotes is not common in business analysis. This makes the article more relatable and adds a personal touch.
- **“Rebuttals Acknowledged” Section:** This section is highly unusual and demonstrates a willingness to engage with criticism. It also adds a layer of self-awareness and sophistication to the piece.
- **“Aside” Comments:** The use of “Aside” comments is informal and conversational. It adds a sense of intimacy and makes the article more engaging.
- **Lack of Traditional Structure:** The article does not follow a traditional business analysis structure. It is more of a narrative-driven essay with a clear argument.
- **Focus on Strategy over Technology:** While the article discusses technology, its primary focus is on strategy. This is a departure from most business articles, which tend to focus on technological innovation.
- **Hyperbolic Language:** The author’s use of phrases such as “scientifically designed” to kneecap Apple, and “beyond their wildest dreams” is hyperbolic and not typical of business analysis. This is used to emphasize the author’s point.

Suitable Outlets

This article would be a good fit for outlets that appreciate:

- **Contrarian viewpoints:** Outlets that are open to challenging conventional wisdom.
- **Long-form journalism:** Outlets that publish in-depth, narrative-driven pieces.
- **Analysis of business strategy:** Outlets that are interested in the strategic implications of technological innovation.

- **A blend of technical and business analysis:** Outlets that are comfortable with technical jargon but also understand the business implications.
- **A strong authorial voice:** Outlets that appreciate a distinctive and opinionated writing style.

Suitable Business News Outlets

Given the article's unconventional style and focus, here are some suitable business news outlets, considering various formats:

Print/Online:

- **Bloomberg Businessweek/Bloomberg Opinion:** The article's analytical nature and focus on strategy make it a good fit for Bloomberg's business-focused audience. The opinion section would be particularly suitable given the strong opinions expressed.
- **The Wall Street Journal (Opinion Section):** The WSJ's opinion pages often feature articles that challenge conventional wisdom and offer unique perspectives on business history.
- **Financial Times (Opinion Section):** Similar to the WSJ, the FT's opinion section is a good fit for the article's analytical and strategic focus.
- **Harvard Business Review (Online):** While HBR tends to be more academic, this article's strategic analysis of IBM's actions could be of interest to their readership.
- **The New Yorker (Long-Form):** The article's narrative style and historical perspective could make it a good fit for the New Yorker's long-form journalism.

Television/Cable:

- **Bloomberg TV:** The article's focus on business strategy and market dynamics would be relevant to Bloomberg TV's audience. The author could be invited to discuss the piece in an interview.
- **CNBC:** Similar to Bloomberg TV, CNBC's audience is interested in business and financial news. The article's provocative arguments could spark a lively discussion.

Science/Technology Outlets:

- **IEEE Spectrum:** Given the author's technical background and the article's discussion of hardware and software, IEEE Spectrum would be a good fit.
- **IEEE Micro:** This publication focuses on the micro-architecture of computer systems, and is a good fit for the author's technical background.
- **Communications of the ACM:** Similar to IEEE Spectrum, this publication is a good fit for the author's technical background.
- **Wired:** The article's focus on the history of technology and its impact on business could be of interest to Wired's readership.

Why These Outlets Are a Good Match:

- **Intellectual Depth:** The article is not a simple retelling of history; it's an analytical piece that requires a certain level of intellectual engagement. The selected outlets cater to an audience that is interested in nuanced analysis.
- **Business Focus:** The article's central argument revolves around business strategy and market dynamics, making it relevant to business-focused outlets.
- **Provocative Content:** The article's unconventional style and provocative arguments are likely to generate discussion and debate, which is something that many of these outlets value.
- **Technical Nuance:** The article's technical details and analysis would appeal to the technically minded audience of the science and technology outlets.

Conclusion

This article is a well-written, thought-provoking piece that challenges conventional wisdom about the rise of the personal computer. Its unconventional presentation, strong authorial voice, and strategic focus make it a compelling read. The author's analysis of IBM's strategic moves is particularly insightful and would be of interest to a wide range of readers in both the business and technology communities.