



Was That Really Five Years?

Posted by [Prof. Goose](#) on March 26, 2010 - 8:22am

Topic: [Site news](#)

Tags: [five years](#), [history](#), [the oil drum](#) [[list all tags](#)]

Dear readers, Monday, March 22 marked the 5th full of year of the existence of The Oil Drum.

Our durability is because of you, the readers. We wouldn't—couldn't—do this if we didn't think people were listening, helping us spread the word, and participating in and advancing the conversation. So, I offer you, our readers, a sincere thank you from all of our staff.

A summary and some thoughts lay below the fold.

In our fifth year, we had over 6M visits and increased our historical number of visits and views by 35%. While the traffic to a lot of the peak oil-related sites has waned a bit in the face of "stable" oil prices and an economy that seemingly makes no sense to anyone, we are doing all right. Much more importantly than traffic, while we have no easy way to measure the quality of our, or our readers', impacts on policy or their own communities, we cannot but hope that we are a part of positive change.

At The Oil Drum, we have always tried to be the bridge between the doomers, the technopians and the cornucopians, to present as many sides of the myriad arguments as we can, so that we do not become too rooted in any mode of thought. This allows us to be nimble, to test raw ideas through your eyes and critical thinking in a way that doesn't happen most places. We really try not to tell you what to think, we just ask that you actually do so—and do so critically and empirically. As this [post of Nate's](#) points out so eloquently, WE DON'T KNOW, but we can learn. I remain proud of this site for its perspective and willingness to take on these immense topics.

This is not easy to do, folks. It is not easy at all. I have made mistakes, but in that I am only reassured by the fact that no one gets them all right; in the end, all we can do is try to do what we think is best as our inner spirit dictates. If one thinks about it, SO much has changed since we started: the oil run-up, hurricanes, the economic debacle, the dynamic climate debate all have added even greater complexity to an already overwhelming topic. It is hard to take it all in and digest to any comprehensive conclusion--which is why we keep doing what we are doing. Not only do we still aspire to make sense of it all, but we also know that it is going to take as many good minds dedicated to the task as we can possibly put together.

These are just some of the many reasons I am thankful for and care deeply for every single person on this staff--they are an amazing collection of people: diverse, intelligent beyond bound, hard-working, personable and engaged. The people of this group may not agree on everything, but we do understand that this site is something special that must be maintained for as long as it can be.

The efforts of Gail, Leanan, SuperG, and Nate (and his recent absence is a loss to this community)

should be especially noted, as they are the folks who are here most days, slogging it out, making it work. Without them, this site would not have persevered over the past months.

I don't think many understand the cumulative toll that these people pay each day to keep this unique space up and running--and they do so with only the compensation of attempting to do the right thing. We are all fortunate for this.

I have never shared anything more than an email conversation with some of these people, but they have all joined together in this fight—all of them for their own reasons, all of them with their own perspectives. When oil was rising in price, it became a signal that conventional thinking could accept as an indicator of scarcity. Despite different skill sets, ultimate goals, pet concerns, etc., our union of purpose remains a shared one. In this period where demand for energy is outpacing geologic depletion, our interests, expertise and worldviews have become more disparate. And that's ok.

In this struggle to discuss energy and our future, the issues are likely to grow even more tense, more vitriolic, and tougher to handle, with all of the situations we face in this world, economic, political, energy, and otherwise. I therefore ask that you, our readers, make every effort to treat each other with respect and understanding when these polemic topics arise.

I am compelled to remind you of one of my favorite quotes from someone I think a lot of, [Jerry Michalski](#); he shared a mantra with me a while back, which he learned from Quaker meeting: "Speak only if it will improve upon the silence." *We thank you for continuing to improve upon the silence here at The Oil Drum.*

No one knows what the future holds, no one holds all of the keys. All we can do here is try to help educate and make that future a better one for as many people as we can, for as long as we can. It is a unique model, based on social and community capital, and in turn it is itself a social experiment of the highest order—and one we need your help in perpetuating its norms, its impact, and its existence.

I hope that you will continue to join us in that purpose.

If you are interested, last year, Heading Out wrote a "[Brief History of The Oil Drum](#)". He's way too nice to me in it--and our contributors deserve much more credit than I am due.

Also, as always, we hope you will keep in mind that this is a volunteer operation that only stays afloat because of your donations to keep our servers running, our search functions functioning, and those bandwidth-sucking graphics flying. If you are so inclined, we hope you will support our efforts. The easiest way is the donate button up in the top left corner of the main page, or you can [click this link](#).

We appreciate you, and we will see you next year.



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