

# Weird, Wired, and Wistful

*The naming of our generation*



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After I watched *The Social Network* on its opening night, I left the movie theater with an uneasy and intriguing feeling: I knew I had just seen a great film that arguably represented the spirits of our generation, yet I couldn't name that generation. That made me wonder--what is the letter (and the value) of our generation?

There's the "Baby-boomer" bracket that economists talk about (those who were born during and before the 60s) and there's the cool "Generation X" that came after the boomers and right before the 80s. After those two, all bets are off about the branding of our generation.

Some call it "Generation Y", but that moniker seems simply to follow an alphabetical order rather than actually representing the generation. Baby-boomers earned their name because of the birth-rate boost, and X-ers got theirs because the future was a variable for them. How can Y be our "symbol" if it means nothing but a letter?

Then the answer hit me with the power of *The Social Network's* one-liner: "He's wired in"--the letter of our generation

isn't a letter but *three* letters: we're the WWW generation.

Obviously, the World Wide Web has affected and infected our lifestyles and psyche in ways that warrant recognition and symbolism. Nevertheless, the more I thought about the defining traits of our generation, the more Ws I found waging their weight in the wordplay of my wonderment--of which I write within.

We're beyond a web generation; we're exactly what the quote said: We're wired. We started with Nintendos and dial-up modems and ended up with Wiis and wireless widgets that work wonders.

We're a generation of Windows' woes and Wikipedia's whole truths and whopping lies.

We're a generation that wanders alternative

worlds, from Warcraft to Wonderland.

We're a generation of war, not a great war, like generations past, but an uncertain one against terror and daily wars against boredom in virtual worlds.

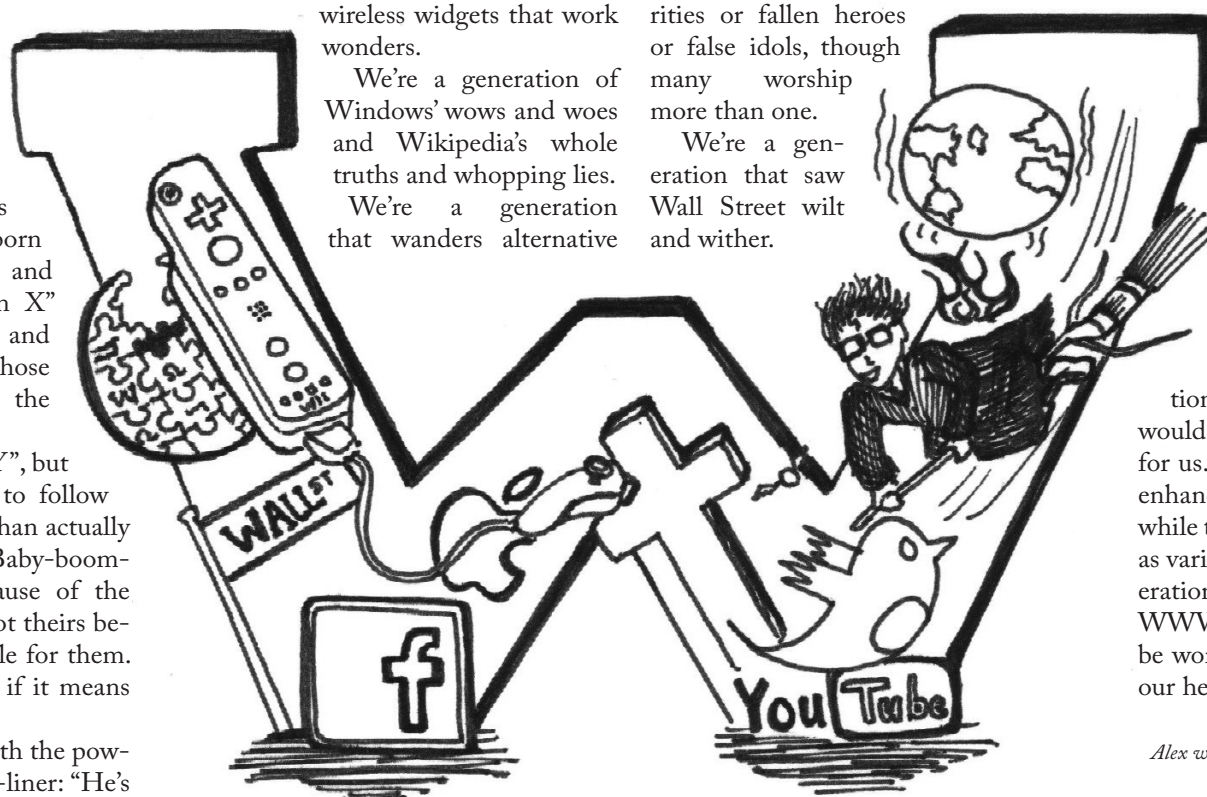
We're a generation of wizards, witches, werewolves, and whatnot.

We're a generation in which weird is welcome and worthy.

We're a generation who grew up under William Jefferson Clinton and George Walker Bush.

We're a generation of worshippers, either of church or celebrities or fallen heroes or false idols, though many worship more than one.

We're a generation that saw Wall Street wilt and wither.



Wikipedia, wizards, and Wiimotes, oh my! illustration by lewis chang

We're a generation with great wealth in goods and information, yet we fail to be wise, instead wasting away at our whim and whining about our wants.

We're a generation worrying with the warnings of global warming.

We're a generation of would-bes and wannabes, weary of wandering through life wondering if it's worth living without wavering.

We're a generation wary that the wicked sometimes win and that the whiz can go wrong.

We're a generation wallowing and wrangling with wistful thoughts of the past and wishful thinking of the future.

We're a generation in withdrawal from our present.

We're a generation that went from "whatever" to "what the hell" to "WTF?"

We're simply the WWW generation whether we want it or not, with all our woes and wonders. However, we ought to question for which of the reasons above we would want those three letters to mean for us. The "baby-boomers" represent the enhancement of the American lifestyle, while the value of "Generation X" remains as variable as algebra. What will our generational reputation become? What will WWW symbolize? Would those letters be worth the world to us, or will they be our heaviest weight? ■

*Alex wishes we would waggle our Wiimotes with him whilst he's in Washington.*

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