
Subject: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Tue, 27 Jun 2006 15:37:30 GMT

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Anyone have this happen to them; I have read reviews written about items played at shows about which I am either very familiar or at least somewhat familiar. Now taking into account the differences in system components and room interactions, (even though some of these written about are played in many different rooms at many times of day in the same show,) I have to wonder when a piece that you know; you have discussed many times with others and have read extensively about is treated as something altogether different than you would expect. Ie; when an amp say or a pair of speakers is lauded and praised by an individual and you and pretty much everyones opinion of that piece completely contradicts what you read from someone; would you then have some kind of suspicion? Especially if you learned later on that that piece was in fact somehow tied to that individuals financial status? My point being this; can you accept that even though you have great experience of a piece and that experience is corroborated by others; should you believe in the inherent sincerity of someone's contrary opinion even though they have a potentially conflicted interest in that piece?

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 27 Jun 2006 17:25:33 GMT

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Now that's something we're in 100% agreement about. I'm sure this happens in other lines of business but I've never seen it as rampant as I do in audio.

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Tue, 27 Jun 2006 20:17:05 GMT

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Yes; thats true. There is a line. Now what interests me is exactly where that line gets crossed. I mean maybe someone is close friends with someone else who happens to sell something. If that something isn't exactly so great; and the world is pretty much in agreement on that; do you...support your friends efforts even though they may not be up to par; or, be truthfull regardless of it's effect on others? What is the ethical stance here?

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Bill Martinelli](#) on Wed, 28 Jun 2006 00:30:57 GMT

Let's say it would depend on who you valued more. The person who asked for a straight up answer and honest opine, Or the friend you partake with charad of pretence that the said product is wonderful. Does it really matter if it's a simple audio circuit or a trade secret. It falls on 'your' morals as the person to whom a question put forth to. if then conflict between opinion and friendship. For what side of the fence will you sit? with a friend, or with honesty. Sitting with honesty can provide a better nights sleep.

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Wed, 28 Jun 2006 00:46:46 GMT

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O'Kay; what about if that friend relied on this positive review for his success in his business and if you were to be honest it might adversely affect his future? You would be tempted to do what you could to help; but then your opinion will always be suspect. But what if you really did not care a wit about whether this product did wjhat it claimed or not because you don't really care about the thing it claimed to do. Then would you be on the fair ground to just say; what the hey; I like it. Even if you had no concern one way or the other how well it performed?

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Wed, 28 Jun 2006 02:15:33 GMT

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That's a very good scenario to think about, better still to face and grow through. My thinking is that it is good to be loyal and to pick a side. Stand by your friends and family. It is also good to not have to make a choice between integrity and loyalty. The best way to do both at the same time is to choose one's friends wisely. The trouble comes when the trouble comes, 'cause sometimes a good person stumbles. That's when a person has to make a decision. I've been very blessed, in that I've been fortunate to have a lot of great life-long friends. I haven't had to make a choice like that often, and usually, on the rare time that I do, I sort of just feel like going my own way so the decision isn't that hard.

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Wed, 28 Jun 2006 12:15:17 GMT

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Thanks Wayne; actually I was thinking more along the lines of audio and what to do regarding offering an opinion of someones gear who may have a personal connection to us. If the gear is resoundingly not so fine and everyone knows that; you are putting a personal reputation on the line of you support that less than stellar piece with a positive review from yourself. Thats the connundrum I am interested in. In life I always support my friends regardless; loyalty is very important to me.

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Wed, 28 Jun 2006 13:35:01 GMT

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Yeah, I know my reply was somewhat general, but I believe it still applies. At least I know I choose business acquaintences by the same approach. What I've seen in audio is a tendency for some manufacturers to pander to reviewers, hoping to cultivate a better image. I think this is an ugly thing, transparent in every way. But I also know a handful of people in audio that I trust, and at least one has moved towards becoming a reviewer. That one, I trust because he has shown himself to be trustworthy over the years. Bill Epstein has always been friendly, genuine and honest. The folks at AudioXpress seem like they might be pretty good too.

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Wed, 28 Jun 2006 13:58:44 GMT

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O'Kay; the Master Of The Non-Answer. " Ohh you can't scare me I'm stickin' to the union; Stickin' to the union, Stickin' to the union, Oh you can't scare me I'm stickin' to the union; Stickin' to the union; Till the day I die!" Woodrow Wilson Guthrie Genuine native of Oklahoma and all around good guy.

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Bill Martinelli](#) on Wed, 28 Jun 2006 23:10:49 GMT

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Well John, for me the audio review is a rotten example. Either way it wouldn't matter. If I give a stunning review for a friend on a piece of equipment that is marginal. How can I be tarnished by people who don't like the piece? No matter who made the piece, only a small percentage will agree with me that this is the greatest piece any way. As an example, If I said my horns are the best, edgars horns are the best, wilson speakers are the best, klipsch is the best, 2A3, 300B, no wait it's push pull, SET. ...It wont matter because but mot more than a grouping would say that

anyone of those is the best hands down. So, in answering your question. Of course I review my friends piece. I'm already prejudiced by the fact he is my friend. If the piece in question is absolute dog shit, I have no problem to tell the friend that too. It will save him money in the long run because if it's that bad than there is no money to be made anyway. So you do your friend a favor and write a review. Good reviews help you with sales, bad reviews help you with product development. If enough people told me that a speaker I make with a crappy part doesnt sound so good, do you think I'm going to keep building it with out making a design change just because "i" like it? being self centered isn't a good way to manage a company; so of course i make a change. If sales are good for something then you figure out how to push them out until there is no more market. then wait a few years, make cosmetic change and introduce a new product. It's already been tested as successful. The loyalty is with your friends. If they remain your friends while you converse on common ground and not loose sight of your morals than the friendship is wholesome and working. If you don't speak on common ground and jeprodize your morals then that person is not a friend. you must move on. why do you ask grasshopper?

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 29 Jun 2006 12:40:24 GMT

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Hey Bill; actually in terms of formal reviews thats a whole nother subject. I really posted about show reports and how people handle them. See usually the folks who exhibit in the local shows and area gatherings all know each other or know of each others work and there seems to be a strong loyalty bid from the friends that contribute to the written descriptions of the shows. I was basically wondering how the concept of unbiased reportage is approached in that situation. To write about formal reviewers is pointless in my view. That job comes with a lot of baggage so as we all know anyone reading formal reviews must excersize a small dgree of healthy scepticism. I know it has always been my habit to try and read between the lines in those type of reviews and see what the reviewer is really thinking. Because we know you can't bite the hand that feeds you; but there are ways to do the end run around that. At local shows it would; i assume, be in bad taste to flame someones efforts; but we also know some are not so great. If you as the writer find yourself praising a piece that seems to be universally panned by others; but it belongs to a friend then what and how do you handle it?

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 30 Jun 2006 13:46:54 GMT

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Something like this? -"Cooperative alliances whereby one party posts about another so that product announcement rules can be circumvented are prohibited. If we see these kinds of relationships develop, we will consider the parties to represent one another, whether a financial relationship exists or not. In other words, if you consistently support a particular person or

company, we will view you as a representative of that person or organization even if you're not currently on their payroll. The things that are essentially being traded in many of these informal cooperative relationships are goodwill and credibility, things that have an actual value even though no money may have changed hands. These kinds of cooperative relationships are actually pretty common between certain individuals, dealers and manufacturers. We encourage your participation here, but please realize that these alliances can unfairly disadvantage others. We hope that you will share your views openly, but please be careful to refrain from the temptation to advertise."

AudioRoundTable.com Rules

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Fri, 30 Jun 2006 14:26:16 GMT

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Well; that seems a reasonable caveat. Where does the line begin? Reading rules and laws is easy; interpreting them is where the hard part comes in. On the face of it that seems like a pretty thorough examination of the possibilities but I am sure we could come up with plenty of grey area easily. How much or many times would be considered circumventing product referral rules? If there is a company that provides a service or parts to your site; can you mention them in a positive light on a regular basis? What about a company that advertizes on someones site; can they be mentioned consistently as a high quality item without any rebuttal from a contrary point of view? Does that qualify as a breach of the rule? What if there is a product that really doesn't do what it claims yet is consistently mentioned in a positive light by a member who might have an interest in seeing that product be successful? Even if they own the product themselves and use that as a safety position regarding their consistent positive mention. Lot harder than it looks but really people do rely on what folks write about things so if you as a writer have that power it should be excersized responsibly. Which is the point of this post.

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 30 Jun 2006 15:49:08 GMT

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We want to adhere to the rules. Like you say, it's easy to cross the line, especially when we start feeling like we know one another and are just talking on the forum like we would in person, at a club meeting or trade show or whatever. But the whole reason we established these rules is that we saw unfair advantage for some on other websites, so we want to be careful of doing the same thing here. One place I personally felt conflicted about this was on the GPAF write-ups. Some there are ART sponsors, others aren't. But everyone at GPAF got a banner ad and a write-up. It's truly a grass-roots event that's there to allow folks to show their gear without cost. It allows new small manufacturers and hobbyists the same ability to show as larger companies, and it lets the public have a chance to interact with them. The problem is that non-sponsors have no

association with ART, yet sponsors do. So in order to prevent giving non-sponsors an advantage to sponsors, I wrote up each of them. But I did try to make each write-up pretty basic, just introduce each room and describe its contents. Others were able to comment in more detail. I'm hoping next year some of this will get delegated to others. It's a lot of work to arrange the event, do the press releases and set up signs, take photos and do write-ups afterward. I am thankful that so much enthusiasm has been sparked and I think next year some of these tasks will be delegated to others.

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Fri, 30 Jun 2006 23:04:54 GMT

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Well; there we go. Regardless of how much you bend over backwards to appease a sense of fairness it almost seems impossible. Look at what you have to do in your own words; you have to modify your thinking to accommodate that sense. Can you write that a piece sucks? No. So you do the best you can to give each set-up a fair shake; but then is that giving the reader a fair shake? Where am I going with this? I say you either let the chips fall where they may or you strangle fair reporting. I can't see how it can be done any other way. That's my personal confusion. To be honest requires that feelings and maybe even revenue suffers. To be dishonest or maybe not so dire as that but maybe; let's say disingenuously kind; then you steer people wrong. By preempting your own opinion in the sense that you have to be gentle to all the people who support you; you negate the value of any kind of quality judgement. Saying everything is good is the same as saying everything is not so good; it's meaningless. Because if everything is good then you just buy the cheapest thing. I don't envy you your job here. But I find a value in discussing things on this level.

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sat, 01 Jul 2006 16:35:54 GMT

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Others can comment in more detail; It would not be too cool for me to be very vocal because I am a manufacturer.

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Sat, 01 Jul 2006 19:08:17 GMT

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True but you also reviewed all the set-ups at the show. If you take on the responsibility of

reviewing then you are implicated in our discussion. Along with anyone else who does this.

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sun, 02 Jul 2006 01:28:38 GMT

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No, I didn't review anything. I made a few comments, but kept them pretty sparse. I was too busy to give anything outside my own room a critical listen so I wouldn't have been able to review anything even if I wanted to.

Subject: Re: Pet Peeve

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Sun, 02 Jul 2006 13:04:25 GMT

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O'Kay; my bad.
