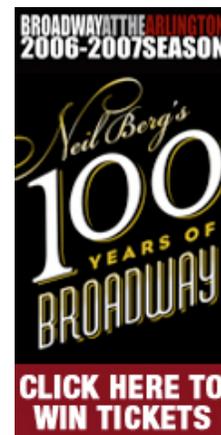




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Diggin' the Doogtoons

By [Mollie Vandor](#), March 15, 2007

UCSB Grad/Online Cartoonist Doug Bresler Makes Friends With The Internet

by *Mollie Vandor*

From file sharing to sharing it all on YouTube, the Internet is entirely reshaping modern media. Whether you love it, hate it, or just plain don't know how to use it, it's still changing the way everything from pop music to porn movies are created, distributed, and exhibited. Entire blockbusters are now available at the click of a legally ambiguous button, bands rise and fall based on their MySpace pages, and political campaigns kick off with snazzy Web sites. Living so close to L.A., it's hard not to hear about the havoc the digital media revolution is wreaking on the salaries of studio execs, gaffers, and grips alike, not to mention the regular news stories about some poor teenager who got arrested because his music collection came straight from LimeWire and not the neighborhood record store.



But the digital media revolution has a happy face, too. For UCSB graduate Doug Bresler, it's the faces of Weird Al Yankovic, Tommy Chong, and the masters of martial arts behind the popular Ask a Ninja podcast, to name a few. That's because Bresler has chosen to embrace

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podcast, to name a few. That's because Bresler has chosen to embrace the online either as a place to distribute his animated short films featuring the aforementioned characters, among other subjects, on his Web site doogtoons.com.

After spending his college years studying film in sunny Santa Barbara, Bresler found himself frustrated with the film department's focus on criticism and analysis, and the fact that the laidback lifestyle of UCSB was not necessarily conducive to the actual making of movies.

"I was in an independent film and I shot some short stuff," Bresler said. "But I wanted to do something bigger, and every time I tried to get people involved, when it didn't involve money or class, it was almost impossible, because the lifestyle in Santa Barbara is so laidback. ... And it's a small town, and there's nothing wrong with that. But, it was tough for me because I really wanted to make a movie." So, after college, Bresler followed the path of many a film major before him, and headed to the City of Angels to make movies of his very own — only to find flakiness in the face of funding shortages isn't an affliction unique to UCSB's film scholars.

"I wanted to do a project, and I was getting really frustrated with trying to get things going and everyone flaking out," Bresler said. "So I figured out the easiest way to do your own film is to do it animated so you don't have to secure locations or get a lighting kit or get a sound guy. I

looked into what it would take to make a cartoon, and I found Flash [a Web site animation program]." He bought a library of how-to books, learned the program, and was ready to make movies by himself. Then came the question of distribution, so he chose the Internet, for better or for worse.

"The advantage [of the Internet] is that your audience is unlimited, which means as long as somebody can get access to a computer they can access your work," Bresler said. "The disadvantage is that nobody, including myself, has figured out how to make a lot of money off it because it's all free."

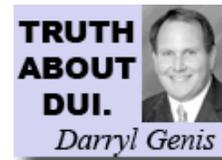
Despite that puzzle, Bresler is still getting by on content licensing,



Animator Doug Bresler (left) and Weird Al Yankovic.



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freelance animation work, and various other deals — some of which have stemmed from people seeing the Web site. He said the site has reached a much wider audience than he expected it to, receiving between about four and six million hits per month. Unlike products produced in the major movie studios, Bresler’s work benefits from a more inexpensive marketing campaign.

“It’s mostly spread by word-of-mouth,” Bresler said. “That’s the most powerful form of marketing. I probably invested like \$500 and we get about 15,000 visitors a day.”

A few have been critical of the cartoons’ numerous swear words, but Bresler explained, “Whenever I’m making these cartoons, it’s not my intention to offend people. It’s just the way people talk and I always wanted to keep it true to the way it really is.”

Ultimately, Bresler said, making short movies for an online audience is not that much different from the theatrical filmmaking skills he was taught at UCSB. According to Bresler, the Internet is the proverbial new frontier for today’s television and film audiences — whether they love it, hate it, or just plain don’t know how to use it.

“I think that online entertainment, that’s the future,” Bresler said. “Everything is going to transform. Television is going to transform and kind of merge with the Internet. They haven’t figured out how to do this yet — it’s just too soon. But, more and more people are getting online everyday, and learning about the Internet. ... When they get to the point where the Internet is as easy to access as televisions, the Internet is going to be dominant.”

4•1•1

To see Doug Bresler’s cartoons, go to doogtoons.com. To see more of Mollie Vandor’s writing, check out her Eye on Isla Vista column at independent.com/online_onlys/eye_on_isla_vista.

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