

JAN 04 2012

The New York Times

So Much Fun. So Irrelevant.

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN January 3, 2012

No MU mention

Two things have struck me about the Republican presidential candidate debates leading up to the Iowa caucuses. One is how entertaining they were. The other is how disconnected they were from the biggest trends shaping the job market of the 21st century. What if the 2012 campaign were actually about the world in which we're living and how we adapt to it? What would the candidates be talking about?

Surely at or near the top of that list would be the tightening merger between globalization and the latest information technology revolution. The I.T. revolution is giving individuals more and more cheap tools of innovation, collaboration and creativity — thanks to hand-held computers, social networks and “the cloud,” which stores powerful applications that anyone can download. And the globalization side of this revolution is integrating more and more of these empowered people into ecosystems, where they can innovate and manufacture more products and services that make people's lives more healthy, educated, entertained, productive and comfortable.

The best of these ecosystems will be cities and towns that combine a university, an educated populace, a dynamic business community and the fastest broadband connections on earth. These will be the job factories of the future. **The countries that thrive will be those that build more of these towns that make possible “high-performance knowledge exchange and generation,” explains Blair Levin, who runs the Aspen Institute's Gig.U project, a consortium of 37 university communities working to promote private investment in next-generation ecosystems.**

Historians have noted that economic clusters always required access to abundant strategic inputs for success, says Levin. In the 1800s, it was access to abundant flowing water and raw materials. In the 1900s, it was access to abundant electricity and transportation. In the 2000s, he said, “it will be access to abundant bandwidth and abundant human intellectual capital,” — places like Silicon Valley, Austin, Boulder, Cambridge and Ann Arbor.

But we need many more of these. As the world gets wired together through the Web and social networks, and as more and more sensors run machines that are talking to other machines across the Internet, we are witnessing the emergence of “Big Data.” These are the mountains of data coming out of all these digital interactions, which can then be collected, sifted, mined and analyzed — like raw materials of old — to provide the raw material for new inventions in health care, education, manufacturing and retailing.

Missouri, Truman State make Kiplinger's list of best-value colleges

By MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

Truman State and the University of Missouri in Columbia have made Kiplinger magazine's 2012 list of the 100 best-value public colleges in the country.

MU, with annual tuition plus room and board of more than \$19,000, ranks 80th on the list, and Truman State with a total cost of about \$15,000 ranks 23rd.

But those prices are reserved for Missourians. For students residing outside the state the costs are \$32,000 and \$21,000 respectively. That doesn't include books and other student fees that could raise the cost even higher.

No Kansas schools were mentioned among Kiplinger's list. Officials at Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine said Kansas schools fell just below the top hundred.

In the survey for value at public higher education institutions, schools were rewarded for low sticker prices and for doling out heaps of financial aid to help students keep graduation debt down. Kiplinger's survey of about 500 public four-year institutions was narrowed to 120 based on SAT and ACT scores; admission and retention rates; student-faculty ratios; and graduation rates. Specialty institutions such as military schools were excluded.

MU, which admits nearly 85 percent of the students who apply, has a graduation rate of 43 percent after four years and 69 percent after six. The average student aid received by MU students is more \$7,100, and graduates on average leave with more than \$22,000 in debt.

At Truman State, academically the most highly selective of the state's public colleges, has 43 /70 percent graduation rates. The average need-based aid received by Truman students is about \$4,000, and debt upon diploma is an average \$19,000.

This makes the 11th consecutive year that Truman State, located in Kirksville, has made the value list. To more efficiently use resources and avoid exorbitant tuition increase, Truman cut spending across its campus.

"We took a look at all our operations and asked ourselves, does this help us accomplish our mission?" President Troy Paino told Kiplinger. He said the ax fell on a campus recycling center that served the whole community and a crime lab available to law-enforcement agencies but "off-limits to students."

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill topped the list. Princeton, Yale, and California Institute of Technology, in that order, topped the list for best values in the traditionally more expensive private colleges and universities.



Missouri facing \$500M hole in upcoming budget

By The Associated Press and Marshall Griffin

Missouri lawmakers will be trying to plug a half-billion-dollar gap in next year's budget when they convene their 2012 session on Wednesday.

State budget director Linda Luebbering says much of the hole is due to a reduction in federal money, such as stimulus funds and Medicaid payments. However, State Senator David Pearce (R, Warrensburg) suggests that that number is not set in stone.

"There are predictions anywhere from \$400 to \$900 million, (that could) be our shortfall for this upcoming year," Pearce said. "How do you fill that? It's gonna be tough."

Also straining the budget is the growth of health-care costs, including a rise in the number of Medicaid patients using home-based services.

House Budget Chairman Ryan Silvey (R, Kansas City) says this is the year that Missouri's finances will "go over the cliff."

Silvey and Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Kurt Schaefer (R, Columbia) both say they will make education funding the top priority in the budget. Schaefer says he hopes to focus cuts on social services and other state agencies.

Marvin Overby is a Political Science professor at the University of Missouri – Columbia. He suggests that Democratic Governor Nixon and the Republican majority's desire to each get re-elected could lead to more cooperation on the state budget.

"They may decide that the special session didn't leave anyone looking very good," Overby said. "They might, might, I stress might, underline and italicize might, arrive in Jefferson City more prepared to deal with each other, probably especially around those budgetary matters."

The struggle over the role of tax credits will likely continue, although some lawmakers say they want to pass them in the form of several smaller bills instead of one giant bill.



A look ahead at the 2012 Mo. legislative session

By Marshall Griffin

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Missouri lawmakers return to Jefferson City Wednesday for the start of this year's legislative session. 2011 was marked by House and Senate Republicans fighting with each other over tax credits and redistricting, while still managing to take pot shots at Democratic Governor Jay Nixon's handling of the state budget. St. Louis Public Radio's Marshall Griffin takes a look at how the 2012 session may play out.

Tax credits & local control of the St. Louis Police Department

Last year's failure to pass wide-ranging tax credit bills during both the regular and special sessions has led some lawmakers to consider a different approach: crafting several smaller bills that cover just one or a few similar-subject tax credits instead of one all-encompassing bill. House Majority Floor Leader Tim Jones supports the approach.

"I've heard from a lot of the public that have said, 'we do not like omnibus bills,' and I agree with the public on that," Jones said. "You're generally asking for trouble with those...they get complicated, they start involving other subjects, so I do prefer to pass those in smaller pieces."

The leader of the Missouri Senate, President Pro Tem Rob Mayer, has also expressed some support for the idea. But he maintains that reforming the state's tax credit system as a whole is a higher priority.

"There'll be discussions, continued discussions, about tax credit reform, and the Speaker and I are going to have the opportunity to sit down and talk privately, so I'll have a better idea as we move forward just what we can do in that area," Mayer said.

But the House and Senate's core positions on tax credits remain unchanged: The House favoring expansion or at least maintaining the status quo, while a core group of Senators want to phase out all tax credits, or at least make them subject to each year's state budget. Last year's tax credit battle also left some collateral damage – namely, the St. Louis Police local control bill.

Despite easily passing the House, Senate leaders refused to take it up unless they got their way on tax credits, and the bill died on the last day of the regular session. This year, backers have changed their strategy, as the bill will originate in the Senate instead of the House. It's sponsored again by Democrat Joseph Keaveny of St. Louis.

"We hope to get it out of the Senate early and get it over to the House, so we can get it accomplished before the last, before the end of the session, before other things that need to be addressed," Keaveny said.

Facing a budget shortfall

Lawmakers will also, of course, focus on the one thing they're required by law to pass: next year's state budget – and once again they're facing another shortfall, with the latest estimate at \$500 million. Rep. Tim Jones continues to favor trimming the fat wherever possible.

"I constantly am of the opinion that government has to be watched, that it has to be trimmed, that it can always do things better, more efficient(ly)," Jones said.

The lack of sufficient state revenues, combined with the lack of federal dollars from Washington, will likely mean more cuts to the state budget. That could again include Governor Nixon's practice in recent years of withholding money from various state agencies, despite being allotted that money by lawmakers.

"It'll continue to be a challenging budget environment...finding efficiencies that can improve government services, while at the same time making sure that we are getting a balanced budget, and continuing to do the things that are necessary as Chief Executive to make sure it's balanced throughout the year," Nixon said.

The effects of an election year

Almost every year, there's an issue or priority that can either distract or disrupt the flow of legislative business. Last year it was redistricting. This year is an election year, and because of the new maps approved last year, several lawmakers are shifting districts, attempting to switch chambers, and in some cases running for statewide office. There's also the governor's race and a presidential election this year. Marvin Overby is a political science professor at the University of Missouri–Columbia.

"Historically we don't expect for a whole lot to get done in election years, because people are looking down the road, gearing up for campaigns, and trying to sort of hold their finger to the wind to see which way things are going to turn out," Overby said.

Lawmakers will also wrestle over whether to tweak the funding formula for K-12 schools, consider suspending the federal prevailing wage for construction workers in Joplin and other disaster areas, and take up bills addressing national health care and illegal immigration.



ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Consultant will study police morale in Columbia, Mo.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS | Posted: Tuesday, January 3, 2012 12:10 pm

COLUMBIA, Mo. • The city of Columbia plans to spend \$45,000 on an external review of its police department following complaints about its leadership and low officer morale.

City Councilman Jason Thornhill pushed for the private consultant in response to complaints about police Chief Ken Burton's management, the Columbia Daily Tribune reported.

The Columbia Police Officers Association and the Missouri Fraternal Order of Police want Burton fired for his own dismissal of police officer Rob Sanders in September after an incident that left an inmate in a police holding cell with a broken back. Burton fired Sanders even though an internal investigation cleared the officer of wrongdoing. The city recently settled a lawsuit filed by the inmate, Kenneth Baker, who will receive \$250,000.

A group of Sanders' supporters is collecting petition signatures seeking Burton's ouster. Supporters of the chief are collecting their own signatures to counter the opposition.

The study will be done by Eric Anderson Associates of Washington state. **The report will also include an organizational review similar to 2006 police force review by the University of Missouri. The consultant fees will come from the police department's budget.**

"Maybe this is our opportunity to get a grade card on the general health of the department," Thornhill said. "There is confidentiality, so it gives everyone the opportunity to say what they really feel like is the general health and welfare of the department. Maybe this is a good time to say, 'Are we headed in the right direction?'"

Burton has previously denied the suggestion that officer morale was low and called the request to reinstate Sanders "troubling" and unrealistic. He was unavailable for comment to the Tribune.

In a letter to members, executive director Ashley Cuttle of the local police group asked officers to be candid during interviews with the consultant and to provide examples to back up their concerns.

"It is our hope this review is being done in earnest and will bring about positive changes," Cuttle said. "If it is not, then we will have further proof of our willingness and attempts to improve our current situation."

Deputy City Manager Tony St. Romaine suggested that internal factions have created divisions within the department, a problem identified in the 2006 review.

"In all levels of the organization, there are feelings of powerlessness, frustration and anger, which have led to disrespectful behavior and further resentment," the 2006 study said. "At present, neither side appears to be able to empathize with or trust the other side enough to appreciate their unique perspective and experience. It is as if each group is unable to 'see' the other's point of view."

Some recommendations from that study have been implemented, including the addition of the ranks of deputy chief and lieutenant to bridge gaps between department leaders and beat cops.

Burton, 56, was hired in January 2009 after a three-decade law enforcement career in Texas, including chief stints in Haltom City and Bryan. City Manager Matthes, who joined the city seven months ago; has said the chief has his full support.

An Oregon study points to better end-of-life care planning

Published: Tuesday, January 03, 2012, 8:24 PM Updated: Tuesday, January 03, 2012, 9:24 PM

By [Joe Rojas-Burke, The Oregonian](#)

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In a cardiac arrest, Helen Hobbs says she doesn't want medics to attempt to revive her. Nor does the 93-year-old Portland resident want to be kept alive with a feeding tube or a breathing machine if it comes to that.

"But I do want comfort care," she says. "And if there is something you can treat to get a person better, that's okay."

Such nuances are not captured in "do not resuscitate" orders used in nursing homes and hospitals across the U.S. A new study in Oregon suggests DNR orders may prompt caregivers to forego treatments that patients would have wanted.

"The risk is that you make assumptions about the patient because of their DNR, you assume they may not want this treatment or that treatment," says Dr. Erik Fromme, a palliative care specialist at Oregon Health & Science University.

A unique registry in Oregon allowed Fromme and colleagues to compare detailed treatment preferences of more than 25,000 people. Since 2009, Oregon has kept an electronic registry of preferences residents recorded with a document called Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment, or POLST.

Oregon caregivers developed POLST in the 1990s to overcome limits of DNR orders and advance directives such as living wills for people who are seriously ill or frail and nearing the end of life. In addition to orders for resuscitation, POLST forms spell out patients' wishes for hospitalization, antibiotics, feeding tubes, comfort measures and other treatment. The Oregon electronic registry gives emergency medical technicians and hospital staff around-the-clock access to POLST orders. A dozen states have adopted POLST orders, and an additional 22 have plans to.

The Oregon researchers found that 18,000 people, or 72 percent of those in the registry, did not want CPR. But many wanted other treatment, including hospital care. About 55 percent wanted the option of antibiotics for infections. Nearly one-quarter considered a temporary feeding tube appropriate. Their report appears in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Dr. Susan Tolle, an internal medicine physician at OHSU and study co-author, said the results make clear the risks of over-interpreting DNR orders.

"Just because you know code status, you know very little about what someone would want," she says.

Previous studies found evidence doctors make assumptions and withhold many kinds of care beyond CPR when patients have a DNR order. For instance, nursing home residents with DNR orders who came down with pneumonia were 30 percent less likely to be hospitalized than comparable nursing home residents with no DNR, University of Missouri researchers found. Researchers at Johns Hopkins University found a DNR order made doctors significantly less likely to order blood cultures, central lines, transfusions and other treatments when responding to hypothetical cases.

Dr. Steven Zweig, a professor at the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Medicine, says DNR orders inappropriately emphasize the question of CPR.

"Because there is an expectation for attempted CPR in the case of sudden death in both hospitals and nursing facilities, this compels a discussion about this attempted therapy, but may not include broader discussions about goals of care and more meaningful medical interventions," Zweig says.

Zweig agrees with the Oregon researchers that POLST helps patients and their caregivers deal with the more meaningful questions about medical care at the end of life.

Fromme points out that "the POLST is only as good as the conversation you have about it." But he says he's found the form helpful in structuring conversations.

"The questions come down to, where are we going to put our focus? On trying to extend life as much as possible, on maximizing quality of life, or somewhere in between?"



Suit filed over Salem, Mo., library's blocking of religious content

Wednesday, January 4, 2012

By JIM SALTER ~ The Associated Press

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ST. LOUIS -- The American Civil Liberties Union filed suit Tuesday against a small Missouri town's public library, claiming it unconstitutionally blocks access to websites related to Wicca and other minority religions.

The lawsuit was filed Tuesday in St. Louis on behalf of Anaka Hunter, a resident of Salem, a largely Christian community of about 5,000 residents in the Missouri Ozarks. It claims that Hunter was trying to do research at the Salem Public Library but filtering software blocked access to many sites about religions such as Wicca, an earth-based religion derived from pre-Christian religions and magical practices that promote a peaceful and balanced lifestyle. Hunter was also unable to access sites about Native American religions.

The suit said some religions were labeled "occult" or even "criminal."

Hunter was doing the research to get more in touch with her Native American roots through spirituality, the ACLU said. Once access was denied, she complained to the library director, who unblocked some, but not all, information. Hunter also complained to the library board, but the board was dismissive of her concerns, the ACLU said.

Federal law requires public libraries to use filtering software that blocks access to sites with explicit, pornographic and adult content. The ACLU suit claims the Salem library went too far, though, in blocking information about religion.

"The library is the last place that should be censoring information about different cultures," ACLU attorney Anthony Rothert said.

Library director Glenda Wofford said it isn't the library's intent to prohibit reasonable use of the Internet for research and other legitimate purposes. She said she would have unblocked websites but Hunter refused to specify which sites she wanted to access, citing privacy rights.

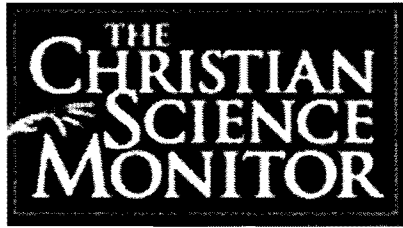
Hunter said in a statement through the ACLU, "It's unbelievable that I should have to justify why I want to access completely harmless websites on the Internet simply because they discuss a minority viewpoint. It's wrong and demeaning to deny access to this kind of information."

The suit said the library's Netsweeper software blocked sites such as the official webpage of the Wiccan church; the Wikipedia entry for Wicca; Astrology.com; and the Encyclopedia on Death and Dying, which contains discussions on death and death rituals for several cultures and religions.

The suit said the software classified sites related to Native American culture and Wiccan faith in the blocked category "criminal skills." But Wofford said the software was provided by the University of Missouri and the library had no control over how it labels content.

"The Salem library is a small, rural library," Wofford said. "We're unable to provide our own filtering system."

The lawsuit asks the court to prohibit the library from blocking religious content "based upon its viewpoint." It also seeks "nominal" but unspecified damages.



Too white? Iowa is 91% white, but does that mean it shouldn't vote first?

Too white: Iowa, which plays a big role in the presidential nominating process, is not racially representative of the US, an NBC correspondent recently noted. But in other ways, analysts say, Iowa reflects the national average.

By Peter Grier, Staff writer / January 3, 2012

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Is Iowa too white to be politically representative of the United States as a whole? That question arises because NBC correspondent Andrea Mitchell on Sunday implied that it was.

While interviewing GOP strategist Mike Murphy, Ms. Mitchell made this comment: "The rap on Iowa – it doesn't represent the rest of the country. [It's] too white, too evangelical, too rural."

Conservative critics have leaped on Mitchell for injecting her opinions into the discussion. To be fair, however, she was clearly citing "critics" who say such things – and they do. In fact, she was almost directly quoting from a New York Times article of Dec. 17, which made much the same point while discussing Iowa's relative economic stability.

"As the first state to take part in the Republican nominating contest, Iowa has long been criticized as too much of an outlier to be permanently endowed such an outsize influence in shaping the presidential field," wrote the Times' A.G. Sulzberger. "Too small, critics say. Too rural. Too white."

It is the "white" part of this that may be raising the most hackles among conservatives. They point out that in 2008 then-candidate Barack Obama won the state and its seven electoral votes, after all.

Well, this is easy to check, isn't it? And at first glance there is something to the criticism of Iowa as racially unrepresentative of the US. According to the US Census Bureau, Iowa is 91.3 percent white. The US as a whole is 72.4 percent white. Iowa's population is 2.9 percent black, as

opposed to 12.6 percent for the US as a whole. Latinos make up 5 percent of the state versus 16.3 percent of the US.

There is no denying that the Hawkeye State is something of an outlier here. But race and ethnicity are not the only factors that determine whether a state is representative of the US as a whole. It may not be the most important, either, politically speaking.

On other demographic measures – income numbers, union membership, seat belt use, high school graduation rate, and so forth – Iowa is much more like the rest of the nation.

“People imagine Iowa to be more unrepresentative than it really is,” noted Prof. John Sides of [George Washington University](#) on [the Monkey Cage](#) political blog last month.

In 2009, political scientists Michel Lewis-Beck of the University of Iowa and Peverill Squire of the University of Missouri took 51 different indicators of social, cultural, political, and policy activities and measured how Iowa compared with the rest of the US. Among their data points was state average income, consumption of alcoholic beverages, percentage of vanity license plates, and voter turnout.

Their conclusion: Yes, Iowa is whiter and older than other states. But on almost everything else, it was among the more average states in the US.

“Is Iowa representative? Yes, at least reasonably so,” [the pair concluded](#) in a monograph on the subject.

Specifically, Iowa is the 12th most representative US state, their numbers showed. This put it far ahead of early-voting rival [New Hampshire](#), which struggled in 27th place.

“All things considered, there seems no cause to take away Iowa’s first-in-the-nation presidential selection status,” wrote Lewis-Beck and Squire.