

# 2013 mid-year link clearance

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Another round of the semi-annual link clearance.

- [Why organized shoplifters love Tide liquid detergent](#): High value-to-volume, low risk, easy to fence due to supply chain issues.
- [How to tell if a “shark in a flooded city street after a storm” photo is a fake in five easy steps](#). Personally, I jump right to step 5: “Just assume it’s a fake.”
- [How to be German](#). Though I think the author is too harsh on German grammar. German grammar rigidly follows the rules, just like the German people. Why the surprise? (For me, learning German was the opposite of the author’s experience. Learning the rules was fun. Learning words was boring.)
- [The Longest Minute on Earth](#): Mike Tanier analyzes college basketball endgames and determines that the “final minute” of a college basketball game takes between eight and twelve minutes.
- [Emerald is Pantone’s Color of the Year](#). Who accepts the award?
- [I Got Paid To Cheer For Another NCAA Tournament Team, And Other Confessions Of A Spirit Squad Member](#): Everybody pays attention to the basketball teams participating in the NCAA tournament, but the real free ride goes to the cheerleaders.
- [So your boss is implicated in a sex scandal](#). The hidden dangers of working in a politician’s office.
- [Very old scientific papers are both awesome and hilarious](#). I remember reading the minutes of meetings of the Royal Society shortly after the vacuum pump was developed. A lot of the entries were of the form “Mr. X placed Y in a vacuum. No change was observed.” Even if Y = a mouse.
- [A lawyer analyzes Bilbo’s contract in \*The Hobbit\*](#).
- [The Crisis in American Walking](#), a series of articles on how walking is on the decline in the United States.
- [Confessions of a Non-Serial Killer](#): What it’s like to become the target of a conspiracy theory. (One thing I learned: If you want the media to lose interest, issue a boring statement.)
- ESPN’s documentary [\*Broke\*](#) looks at the many ways athletes lose their money. It is available for purchase on [Amazon](#) or just [read a nice article about it](#).

- [Celestra](#), a Battlestar Galactica-inspired LARP which took place on the destroyer Småland in Gothenburg, Sweden. [Wired has a write-up](#). See? I knew learning Swedish would come in handy for something. (No, I didn't go.)
- Twice a year, fans of Disneyland choose a day to show up at the park [smartly dressed](#) in vintage fashion inspired by the illustrations of park guests in the 1950's. They call it [Dapper Day](#). Here are some pictures from [Spring 2013](#). Maybe next time, I'll wear a suit to Disneyland. I have a few to choose from.
- Last year, [I linked to Conspiracy Über Alles](#), a research result that shows that once you entertain one conspiracy theory, you start to take them all, even if they are contradictory. This year, we get to observe the inevitable consequences: [Conspiracy theorists are convinced that a research paper critical of conspiracy theorists is part of a conspiracy](#). Naturally, the researchers analyzed the angry responses to their original paper and [published a new paper](#) aptly titled *Recursive Fury*. I can't wait for Round Three.
- [Elections for directors of public companies are a sham](#). In 2012, every single director who failed to be re-elected remained on the board anyway. One time, a company called me to say, "Our records show that you have not sent in your vote. Please do so, so that we can hold our annual meeting." I explained, "Yes, I am withholding my vote on purpose. Preventing a quorum is the only way I can prevent the current board of directors from being re-elected."
- [How disposable chopsticks are made](#). The part of the process where my jaw dropped was at timecode 7:30, where all the chopsticks are just dumped into *huge piles*, and then human beings sort through them for quality control. Certainly they can automate this part, too?

And, as always, the obligatory plug for my column in [TechNet Magazine](#):

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