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### Firmage Interviewed By ZDnet

From: Stig Agermose <[stig.agermose@get2net.dk](mailto:stig.agermose@get2net.dk)>  
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Stig

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Joe Firmage Transcript

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Big Thinkers: Joining us on Big Thinkers is one of the most talked about people in Silicon Valley, Joe Firmage. So, Intend Change, what's that about? You going from prophesy to profiteering again?

Firmage: Well, hopefully a graceful combination of both the .com and .org frame of mind. Intend Change is a venture construction company that will build a small number of breakthrough new businesses in partnership with a keiretsu if you will, venture capital resources, engineering, and marketing talent, and also the sort of management consulting to put all the moving pieces together.

Big Thinkers: So what's the difference between everybody else that's jumping on the VC bandwagon?

Firmage: Well, a number of things. First of all, the people forming Intend Change have about as much experience in the Internet economy as anybody on the planet. It's that simple. We are financed by the organization that financed Yahoo! and eTrade, and USWeb. We've got, of course USWeb/CKS.

Big Thinkers: You're talking about Softbank?

Firmage: Softbank, yes.

Big Thinkers: I must mention that Softbank is actually a part owner of ZDTV.

Firmage: Sure. Softbank as you well know has its hands in a lot of the leading ventures of the Internet economy. Also, Crosspoint Ventures, with whom I go back almost a decade in various venture capital projects. But, perhaps the most important [aspect] of Intend Change is the expertise that we're bringing to bear. We are hiring the seal team of Internet economy experts, who have been there, done that, on multiple occasions in the past half decade. And have been some of the pioneers of assembling what we think is the Detroit of the next century.

Big Thinkers: What did you see on the Web this time that made you feel like you could step in and there was an opportunity there?

Firmage: Well, we have seen at USWeb, a staggering number of good ideas that are still-born, for lack of the expertise and the resources to wire them together properly. We are going to pick off 10 to 15 of the very best of those ideas, generated either from entrepreneurs, or as spinouts from Fortune 500 companies, which is something we should talk about. And put all of the pieces together: the management teams, the venture capital, the strategic alliances, both inside the industry and in the economy as a whole. To really launch these ventures properly.

Now About Them Aliens

Big Thinkers: Your views that led you to leave USWeb obviously didn't scare away these big investors. Have your views changed? Have they modified since we last spoke?

Firmage: Not at all. In fact, I'm in a better position than ever as a result of my ongoing studies and my investments in the space sciences project to comment on it. And we'll get to that conversation in a moment. But I think it's important to note that the difference between USWeb and Intend Change, with respect to my extra-curricular publishing activities, is that the expectations are set properly in advance here. I stepped back from USWeb because the expectations there had previously not been set. At Intend Change I'm dealing with folks who have been pre-disclosed. The market knows, the employees know, and anybody who works with me knows that these are things that I think about. These are things that I'm going to invest in and study.

Big Thinkers: Now there are a flurry of questions from our viewers. We've asked viewers to send in the NetCam questions. We've got one right here. We received this NetCam question from Colleen in Redwood City.

Colleen: I'd like to know why you believe that modern technology is connected with aliens?

Firmage: This first and fundamental question is this: Is it possible for life across the cosmos to develop a form of propulsion more advanced than controlled firecrackers and jet turbines? I, and a large body of new physicists believe the answer to that question is definitively yes. If it is possible, then there are all sorts of astronomers and cosmologists who would leap over to my side of the debate and say, "Well, it's almost certain then that humanity has been visited in the past by advanced forms of life." If that is so, then we need to consider more carefully the relatively well documented, better documented than most people think, idea that at certain times in this century, yes remarkable events have occurred that are not public. But, that is not the center of my hypothesis. My hypothesis does not rest anywhere close to Roswell, New Mexico.

Big Thinkers: Did you ever believe that this was going to happen, that this was how people would respond, and was it worth it?

Firmage: I presumed that this is the response that I would get. But, the reason I did it was because I work with scientists and engineers and theologians and others who for a variety of reasons don't have the millions of dollars that I do to be able to risk my career on talking about such subjects. The scientists that I work with for example, behind the scenes, cannot suffer the type of credibility damage that...

Big Thinkers: So you put yourself forward?

Firmage: Absolutely. Because I think society needs to be mature enough to start thinking outside of the boundary conditions of 20th century physics, which we know are not a closed subject. We all presume in western civilization that the gods of 20th century physics have explained the fundamentals of the cosmos. That is not so. They have derived in the past 80 years

remarkably effective mathematical equations that describe certain parts of nature. However, every physicist knows that the fundamental of space-time, of which I write and others write, has not been discerned. And it is precisely in that domain that these great innovations will arise.

Big Thinkers: If I said that your views were taken to heart and actually were incorporated, what would transpire?

Firmage: We would start compensating the leading researchers in engineering and science, who are pushing the limits on the reach of humanity, at least as much as we pay our sports figures. To me it's utterly inexcusable for society to trivialize what could be the most profound revolution in human science ever. And at the same time glorify the tactical and the tedious. We have become a society which has lost its sense of discovery, convincing ourselves that we are forever bound on this small planet.

Big Thinkers: How could you say that? I mean, there are so many discoveries in biotechnology, nanotechnology, cloning, on the Internet? How could you say at a time like this that we've lost our desire for discovery?

Firmage: That is true to a large extent in every discipline of science other than the discipline of science which underlies them all. Physics. Physics is to scientist what Genesis is to the faithful. And when you have a revolution in physics, you have a revolution in all science built there on. Which means chemistry, geology, biology, and basically all of the engineering disciplines that we've built on those sciences. This is very profound stuff we're talking about.

Big Thinkers: Let's take another video mail question. This one comes from Britt Morris from San Francisco, who wants to know about the possible cover-up.

Morris: If there really is this big conspiracy, how come so many people bought into it, and it hasn't been uncovered yet?

Firmage: That's an excellent question. It's one that I don't try to spend much time talking about because I don't want to get down the rat hole of conspiracy theories and all that stuff.

Big Thinkers: What about proof?

Firmage: I'll tell you the best information I have. The best information I have is that the organization that does have, shall we say, better knowledge than the public is much smaller than you might guess. It is very small. It is also quasi-private, established half a century ago and essentially custodians for one of the greatest secrets of all time. Remember, 50 years ago there was no such thing as a calculator. The most advanced technology that John Q. Citizen was familiar with was a Studebaker. Most people did not know the difference between a moon and a planet. And you talk about the introduction of knowledge that you're being visited by extra-terrestrials?

## Visions in the Night

Big Thinkers: You yourself have mentioned, in The Truth, you mentioned being visited by something. And I know you've said it a million times before, but just for the recorded, tell me exactly what happened.

Firmage: Well, a lot of people throughout history have experienced what I've described. It was an image of a visitor. At home. Waking up at 6:10 in the morning. Ready to head out to the gym. My alarm clock goes off. I slam my hand down on the snooze button as I tend to do. And in the next nine minutes this image of a person hovered over my bed for about three minutes and we had a conversation about space travel.

Big Thinkers: What did you say?

Firmage: He spoke first. He said, "So, why have you bothered me?" He looked annoyed and perturbed. I said, I was between asleep and awake, and I said, "Because I want to travel in space." And he chuckled and said, "Well why should you have that

opportunity?" And I said without even thinking, "'Cause I'm willing to die for it."

Big Thinkers: And are you?

Firmage: It's been a dream of mine since I was very, very young. I was into astronomy and science in general starting at age 8 or 9. Bought my first telescope at age 11 and got a physics scholarship. So I've been thinking about this sort of stuff for a long time. But I will tell you something. You talk to anybody in my background. Anybody. They will tell that you I'm one of the most rational left brain type people they've ever met. So for me to have that experience was a wake-up call, so to speak.

Big Thinkers: But the analogies to religion are very, very strong.

Firmage: Sure.

Big Thinkers: You yourself grew up in a strict Mormon family in Salt Lake City, Utah. Didn't an angel visit Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism? I mean, angel/alien?

Firmage: Yes, he did have such an experience. And I'd left the Mormon church by age 15. So, again, what I have come to see is that the broad reach of science and the sweeping trajectories of world faiths may in fact be on a path of convergence that we will see in our lifetimes. And that path of convergence has a direction-- the cosmos.

#### The Internet Chasm and Aliens on the White House Lawn

Big Thinkers: You've talked about the need to get across an Internet chasm in the economy, so, are we going to get across that chasm or are we going to be mired by this conflict between the potential of communication and the vulnerabilities it creates?

Firmage: That's a superb question. It's an open question. The problem we have today is that we do not engineer our software systems as if they were critical systems. Very few software systems historically have been engineered for fault tolerant operation in any dimension. Whether scalability, or attack, or random failure. Infrastructure Defense is designed to aggregate the knowledge to answer that question based upon a certain set of attributes for a given institution or organization's IT. So, take any government agency for example. ID would go in, make a comprehensive assessment and compare that against its knowledge base, and make a prediction, if you will, on the plausible scenarios and probabilities with each scenario for the reliability of that infrastructure.

Big Thinkers: Now I guess the question is, "Will we mire ourselves in computer viruses and computer worms?" Is it your belief that civilizations that we may encounter in other parts of the universe have had to cross a similar divide, and is there something to be learned here?

Firmage: I think there is. I personally am convinced that there is advanced life out there and that it is equipped with technology to travel.

Big Thinkers: Superior to ours then?

Firmage: Vastly. Vastly superior to ours. Remember we have been engineering the "energy" in space for 40,000 days. 40,000 days in a multibillion year planetary history. We have just begun to learn technology. And we're confronting these seminal questions that will be recorded in the history books a millennium from now as fascinating, historically important debates. When we engineer systems, on the Internet for example, for virus management on a systemic basis, these are big, big decisions. These are the future Y2K decisions that we're making. And we make them everyday.

Big Thinkers: In the past, when we've gone searching for other life, like when we came over here, we've infected that life. These people may be advanced enough to travel in space, but are they advanced enough to withstand our human viruses, or are we

going to wipe out another race by meeting them?

Firmage: I love that question because it answers the most frequently asked question, "Why don't they land on the White House lawn?"

Big Thinkers: Are they afraid of the prime directive?

Firmage: It sounds kind of corny, but it makes a hell of a lot of sense. Every time human beings have interacted with more primitive cultures, it's been a total disaster. So, is it realistic to believe that if you were an advanced extra-terrestrial visitor to this young world of primates, that you would want to empower those 6 billion animals with the most potent technology ever conceived? Far more potent than nuclear energy. Far more potent.

Big Thinkers: I'm wondering how you'll work some of these large companies that you want Intend Change to do business with, some of which are very conservative, and may consider your views a bit out there?

Firmage: No doubt. To parse the answer. First, everybody knows, going in, what I do in both halves of my life. So, I think everybody's pre-disclosed on what to expect. But, also I think, in the Internet economy, one of the things we need most, particularly the conservative corporations, is out of the box thinking.

Big Thinkers: Did the Mormon belief that there are many planets and life forms similar to ours influence you at all in this quest?

Firmage: That's an interesting question. First of all, I would describe my spiritual worldview as interfaith. Highly ecumenical. Highly integrating, if you will. I see profound, deep wisdom in ancient eastern mysticism. I see the anthropomorphic reduction of that in Judeo-Christian teachings. By combining the two together you get a very integrated worldview. Mormonism is interesting because it works in a modern civilization as well as any faith. No doubt it had some influence on me. Mormonism is a very cosmically aware faith. But, I'll tell you again; this is not a religious crusade. It's about the unity of rigorous signs. And also the recognition that what science does is measure. Science is not what you are. Science measures what you are. You are something called the cosmos. And I think that deserves to be characterized as a spiritual concept.

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