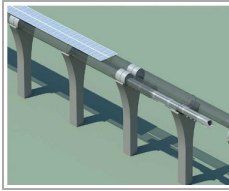




FRED WILSON: Apple Is In Danger

(http://www.businessinsider.com/fred-wilson-apple-is-in-danger-2013-8)



I Just Read Every Page Of Elon Musk's Hyperloop Plan And I T...

(http://www.businessinsider.com/elon-musk-hyperloop-today-2013-8)



This Man Is Accuse Being eBay's Bigge

(http://www.businessinsider.com/this-man-is-accused-being-ebays-biggest-bully-unm...-2013-8)

LOGIN

REGISTER (HTTPS://WWW.BUSINESSINSIDER.COM/REGISTER?FIRST=INDEX&REDIRECT=/EVERYTHING-YOU-NEED-TO-KNOW-ABOUT-JEFF-BEZOZ... BI INTELLIGENCE (HTTPS://INTELLIGENCE.BUSINESSINSIDER.COM/EVERYTHING-YOU-NEED-TO-KNOW-ABOUT-JEFF-BEZOZ...)

(http://oascen...al.businessinsider.com/RealMedia/ads/click/Quads/businessinsider/submit/5... Plus GOOGLE FROM BUSINESSINSIDER.COM \$7.61/mo... WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/TODAY/BUSINESSINSIDER.COM) f (/WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/BUSINESSINSIDER) t (/TWITTER.COM/BUSINESSINSIDER)

BLACKBERRY Z10 & Q10 Built to make your business unstoppable. Discover more All BlackBerry

TECH (HTTP://WWW.BUSINESSINSIDER.COM/SAI)

More: Jeff Bezos (/category/jeff-bezos) Amazon (/

The Truth About Jeff Bezos' Amazing 10,000-Year Clock

WALTER HICKEY

(HTTP://WWW.BUSINESSINSIDER.COM/AUTHOR/WALTER-HICKEY)

AUG 12, 2013 11:42 AM | 15,749

The 49-year old — worth \$25.2 billion as of March 2013 (<http://www.forbes.com/profile/jeff-bezos/>) — has since been subject to scrutiny as many are curious to see what the Amazon CEO plans to do with a newspaper.

One element of Bezos' life that has routinely come up is "The Clock," one of Bezos' philanthropic ventures.

The story as you've heard it probably goes something like this: Jeff Bezos is personally building an atomic clock in the middle of the desert that is designed to last for millennia.

Most of that is wrong.

In order to clear up some of the misconceptions, here's what you need to know about the clock.



Jeff Bezos

So is Jeff Bezos personally building a clock in the desert?

Well, while he's funding it, and it's on his land, the clock itself is actually the project of the Long

Now foundation.

The Long Now Foundation itself is the brainchild of inventor and engineer Danny Hillis, who launched the non-profit to build the clock. The Long Now foundation has over 3,300 members who are supporting the project, but Bezos is by far the most prominent and seemingly deep-pocketed, kicking in a projected \$42 million, according to a Wired profile of

the Clock

(<http://www.wired.com/gadgetlab/2011/06/10000-year-clock/all/>).

The foundation also employs an engineering team of around a dozen

(<http://longnow.org/clock/background/>) and also has multiple partners and sponsors who are helping to make the parts for the clock. Bezos is just picking up a lot of the check.

Is it atomic?

No. The clock, like many other more short-sighted clocks, is powered mechanically by a large weight hanging on a gear. Visitors can wind the clock, or it can also be wound by a solar winder.

The potential energy of the falling weight alone can power the clock for years in the absence of humans or sunlight, too, in the potential scenario where we nuke each other.

Also, the designers focused on how to power the clock for quite a while and deduced that atomic power was a uniquely poor idea.

(<http://longnow.org/clock/principles/>)

How do they seriously expect this thing to last for 10,000 years?

They've put a substantial amount of thought



Long Now Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10151841742357868&set=pb.16998442867.-2207520000.1376321572.&type=3&theater>)
Brian Eno – a backer of the Long Now Foundation – looks at parts of the clock in construction.

(<http://longnow.org/clock/principles/>) into this aspect.

The clock is made out of durable but not particularly valuable materials, in order to ensure both longevity and immunity from looters. It's going to be built 500 feet down into a Texan mountain, to shelter it from any sort of surface cataclysm or weather erosion. The clock won't tick, because that will make the parts degrade. They're planning on earthquakes, too.

It's going to be powered by human winding with a solar fail safe. They're using a use solar alignment to adjust a very slowly moving mechanical oscillator in order to keep the clock accurate.

Monuments in the desert? This is starting to sound like that Shelley poem (<http://www.potw.org/archive/potw46.html>). Seriously, why are they doing this?

That's a great question. Recall that proverb "A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in"? It's that, on steroids.

The objective of the project is to compel people to assume a perspective they don't typically take. People don't realize that their actions have consequences that reverberate down the line; that what they pursue in life can have a meaningful impact following their death.

In a June 2012 feature, Bezos told the Wall Street Journal:

(<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304543904577395164138218638.html>)

"We humans have become so technologically sophisticated that in certain ways we're dangerous to ourselves. It's going to be increasingly important over time for humanity to take a longer-term view of its future."

It's a clock to keep us humble. Amazon.com (<http://amazon.com>) won't last 10,000 years. Not even the Pyramids at Giza have lasted 10,000 years. No empire in the history of civilization has lasted 10,000 years. America is a meager 300 years old. It's not uncommon to lose our sense of scale or to inflate our own generation's self-worth when it comes to time.

The clock is there to remind people that they are small when it comes down to it, and that most of our lives will last at the very most a fraction of 1% of the aspirational life of the clock. It's just another (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pale_Blue_Dot) bold (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollo_11) gesture (<http://voyager.jpl.nasa.gov/spacecraft/goldenrec.html>) that humanity has designed to give their descendants a sense of scale.

Why is Bezos not giving this money to cancer research/sick children/environmental causes/various pet issues?! Couldn't the money be better spent today?

This line of argument always falls short. First of all, there's plenty of money going to these causes at the moment. Keeping that in mind, \$42 million is essentially pocket change for Bezos.

Second, people are allowed to spend their money on stuff that other people think is stupid. America, you spend \$633,000 per day (<http://www.businessinsider.com/candy-crush-saga-daily-revenue-2013-7>) on Candy Crush Saga. Factoring in that you've been doing that since at least May 15, (<http://thinkgaming.com/app-sales-data/2/candy-crush-saga/>) you've spent \$56 million over the course of like three months on an iPhone game instead of cancer research.

Bezos dropping \$42 million on a monument to humanity designed to last 10,000 years sounds better than that.

Read more about the Long Now Foundation here »
(<http://longnow.org/>)

Disclosure: Jeff Bezos is an investor in Business Insider through his personal investment company Bezos Expeditions.

[Share](#)

▲ Alerts (/register?action=index&first=alerts&from_post=5208fc38eab8eacd5e000003)
☑ Newsletter (</newsletter?source=sharebox>) 🔗 URL

Recommended For You



(<http://www.businessinsider.com/fred-wilson-apple-is-in-danger-2013-8>)
FRED WILSON:
Apple Is In Danger
(<http://www.businessinsider.com/fred-wilson-apple-is-in-danger-2013-8>)



(<http://www.businessinsider.com/ender-game-2013-8>)
I Finally Figured Out Why I Hate Ender's Game, The Cult Sci-Fi Novel That Everyone Else Apparently Loves
(<http://www.businessinsider.com/ender-game-2013-8>)



(<http://www.businessinsider.com/chart-that-will-make-you-ashamed-minimum-sentencing-reform-only-happened-now-2013-8>)
This Chart Will Make You Ashamed Of Prisons In America
(<http://www.businessinsider.com/chart-that-will-make-you-ashamed-minimum-sentencing-reform-only-happened-now-2013-8>)



(<http://www.businessinsider.com/men-things-you-didnt-know-about-the-sopranos-breaking-bad-the-wire-and-mad-men-2013-8>)
16 Things You Never Knew About The New Golden Age Of TV
(<http://www.businessinsider.com/men-things-you-didnt-know-about-the-sopranos-breaking-bad-the-wire-and-mad-men-2013-8>)

Here's What Successful People Do In The Morning
(<http://www.businessinsider.com/what-successful-people-do-in-the-morning-2013-7>)