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THE RAVAGES OF TIMELINE The May/June issue featured our annual list of the year’s top technology breakthroughs (“10 Emerging Technologies”), and as usual, readers took issue with some of our choices. The inclusion of Facebook’s Timeline seemed to be a particular point of annoyance. Alec LaLonde of Salt Lake City, Utah, wrote: “Please elaborate on how it will ‘have the greatest impact on the shape of innovation in years to come’? Your entire supposition is based on the collection of data for the purpose of advertising—how does this at all help its users? To them, Timeline is merely an (often unwanted) restructuring of a user’s homepage. And I suspect the lofty idea of a Web ‘permanent record’ is merely a side effect of maximizing data collection, and not at all the primary goal. Facebook’s much-hyped IPO makes this decision especially disconcerting. Of all the innovation going on in this country, Timeline? Really? Shame on you.”

LENDING AND MISSPENDING The U.S. Department of Energy’s loan program is “in shambles,” wrote TR editor David Rotman in “Can Energy Startups Be Saved?” Because of diminishing government help, Rotman concluded, the best bet for small energy companies will be to partner with the large companies they might once have hoped to make obsolete. “This sounds trite,” responded dnwdfw, “but maybe companies need to grow organically, without federal intervention. The vast majority of startups do fail, and that birthing process actually weeds out the weak and marginal, allowing the ones with the right DNA to thrive. It’s called the market, and we need to let it work and stop letting the feds pick the winners based on politics and cronyism.”

Sault, another online commenter, took a different tack: “DoE loans are problematic nowadays because of gridlock in Con-

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