"Steve Jobs and Willy Wonka to me were just like these brilliant people who had these magical factories where every six months they'd come out with this huge show," David Karp told me a few years ago. "I thought that was like the coolest thing ever. That's what I wanted to do."

And now, it seems, he just might have done it.

Karp, of course, is the 26-year-old autodidact who founded Tumblr, the social-networking blog site.

Karp isn't your typical internet entrepreneur. He grew up in New York, on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, and attended the Calhoun School, where his mother was a science teacher.

At Calhoun, Karp drove teachers nuts[1] by trying to hack[2] into the school's computer system. After leaving, he spent a year at the Bronx High School of Science, where he studied Japanese. But he fell in with the wrong crowd and dropped out[3] – besting[4] technology giants such as Jobs, Bill Gates, Larry Ellison and Mark Zuckerberg, who all timidly waited until after entering college to abandon their formal education.

By then, Karp had read a book about HTML software and had helped small businesses build websites. As a 14-year-old, he worked at Tekserve, a huge, hipster-laden[5] Apple-repair specialist.

Soon enough, Karp was introduced to Fred Seibert, a former jazz-music record executive who became one of the creative founders of MTV, Nickelodeon and Comedy Central.

"I was so nervous and not sure what to say," Karp said about meeting Seibert. But he remembered being very impressed by Seibert, dressed all in white, hanging out in this cool office space with a bunch[4] of tech geeks, trying to change the world.

He learned so much from Seibert and those around him that Karp's parents allowed him to keep working for Seibert while he was home-schooled. He took Japanese classes at the Asia Society and learned maths and English from a tutor.

 Eventually[6], he started working for UrbanBaby. He worked remotely[7] from home, logging into the UrbanBaby servers and cashing his salary cheques. He was nervous that the company's founder, John Maloney, would fire him if he found out he was only 16.

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1. drive somebody nuts : *rendre quelqu'un fou*   2. *pirater*   3. drop out of school : *abondonner ses études*

4. Doing better than   5. *hyper branché*   6. *finalement*   7. *À distance*