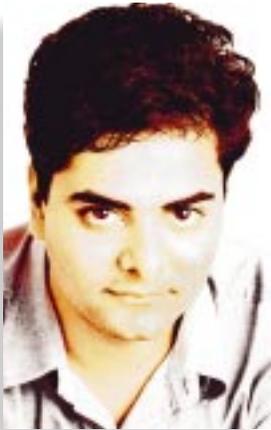




The Intranet of Conversations



“...why do companies usually strive to limit, control and suppress ‘non-official’ conversations, instead of encouraging and recording them intelligently?”

First it was company buses. Then subsidised annual picnics. Then free in-house cafeterias. And now it is T1 lines and flat-screen monitors. The brave new breed of knowledge workers, condemned to hunching-up in front of their computers nine hours a day, need something in the workplace to boast about. So, we flaunt the VSAT dish, leased-line Internet access or liberally distributed laser printers as proof that our firm is indeed cutting-edge. But are we extolling anything better than glorified file-sharing, printing and e-mail capabilities?

How is the technology helping us learn, laugh and share?

Is your company’s million-rupee data network only a top-down, controlled pipeline that pushes unwanted policies and procedures? A simple way to broadcast an e-mail directive from the boss to 200 employees? Or is it really helping to increase the levels of productivity, efficiency and joy?

Instead of being another set of shackles to tie people down, your network can be a matrix to harness their collective ideas and experience.

Consider common problems in companies. One, finding someone. Buzz the desk phone of a colleague two floors up all afternoon, only to discover the next day that he is on tour. Or consider how different teams often duplicate time and resources working on the same problem. Or how new employees have no knowledge of how their predecessors tackled the same problems that they face now.

The answers are around us, but not where we’re looking. The answer lies in conversations—the most basic currency of human interaction—that fluidly pass through the spaces that memos and triple cc:’ed e-mail always seem to get stuck in.

So why do companies usually strive to limit, control and suppress ‘non-official’ conversations, instead of encouraging and recording them intelligently? When human expressions are curtailed, only two possible consequences result. Either a thoughtless subservience expressed in meek compliance or a hidden, subversive resentment. Both are disastrous to growth.

So every company needs to create an Intranet of Conversations that envelops the network. Encourage employee bulletin boards, make interactive forms that allow spontaneous, anonymous feedback. Make simple, centralised logs to put messages about travel plans. Make available, ‘post-mortem’ documents of lessons learnt from projects that ensure an evolution of best practices.

The collective wisdom of groups is the most powerful engine to generate solutions. Unless the assumption is that employees are too dumb to share anything meaningful.

In which case, why did you hire them?

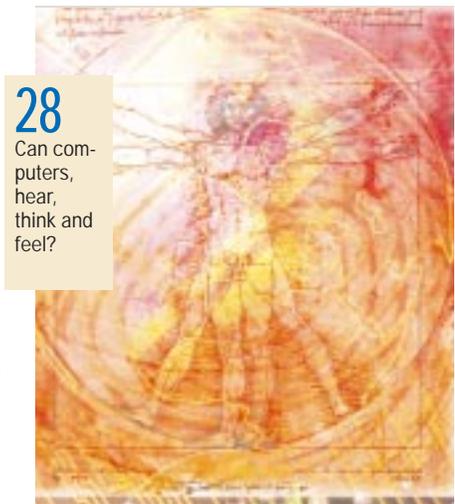
Executive Editor

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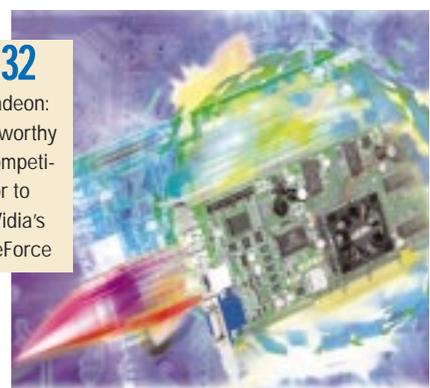
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 Compaq Armada 100S
 Compaq Presario 12XL305
 Compaq Presario 17XL361
 IBM ThinkPad A21M
 Toshiba Protege 7200
 Toshiba Tecra 8100
 Zenith 21A

Graphics card

ATI Radeon

SOFTWARE

System utilities

McAfee Office Central
 Norton SystemWorks 2001
 Ontrack SystemSuite 3.0

Shareware utilities

CPU Load
 CPUGH
 NGB registry cleaner
 SystemMechanic

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Strata 3D

ARENA (The gaming zone):

Dave Mirra Freestyle Bmx,
 Deer Hunt Challenge, Die Hard
 Trilogy 2, Imperium Galactica II,
 Kawasaki Jet Ski, Oni, System
 Shock 2, WCW Nitro

DEVELOPERS

Java (Developers), Beat 2000
 (rock), Beat 2000 (techno),
 Crossartist 1.1, Finereader 4.0b
 Professional, Easycharts 2.05,
 Multi-database Connection
 Pooling, Tchart v5.00, Tsarevna
 —A Medieval Russia Quest

GALLERY

Windows Themes:

Cel 2001, Dolphin_world, Flying-
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 Newyear, Nottinghamill,
 Simpler_time, Spidey, Winter-
 jewels

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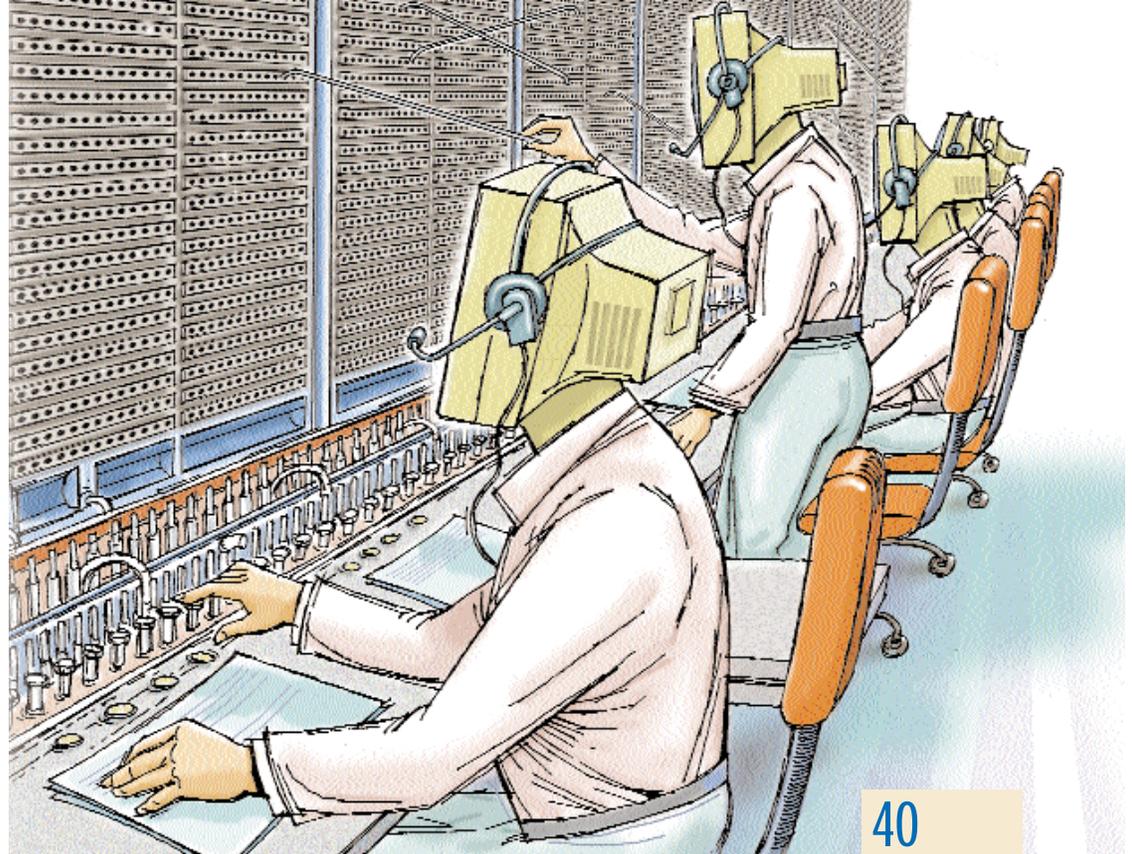
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 Cars_r01, Chicken_run, Christi-
 na-Aguilera, Crackle, Davidson,
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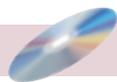
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ON THE CHIP CD

CD 1-Mindware

RESOLVE TUTORIALS ON UNIX & C

An intensive self-learning guide to HTML that answers all your queries about the language and its applications. Great runtime programming examples

WORKSHOP

A comprehensive video workshop that tells you how to install a video-card and upgrade it



TROUBLESHOOTING

Dr CHIP's invaluable guidelines for a healthier, more efficient Outlook Express

SOFTWARE APPLICATION OF THE MONTH

FULL VERSION OF STRATA3D
 And lots more software across various categories

DEVELOPERS (JAVA) HEX WORKSHOP V3.0

A well-done 32-bit set of hexadecimal development tools that combines advanced binary editing with the flexibility and ease of a word processor

VB PROJECT ANALYZER 5.2.11

Fine-tunes programs developed in Visual Basic. Collects detailed information about forms, modules and constants classes used in your VB project

IN MAGAZINE

ROGER WILCO

A free voice chat application that allows you and your



friends to talk to each other while playing multiplayer online games.

UTILITIES

V-GO 2.0

Universal Password is a great solution to the problem of password overload. Maintains an encrypted list of all your



Cats, Denise_richards, Faith_hill, Fila, Garfield, Leo2, Nature4, Perfect_storm, Rail, Simpsons, Smg, Stwallpaper11, Win_me

HOME

Catraxx 2000 v4.51, Harmony Assistant v7.4.2a, Sf Cd Cover 2.02, Winvcr 2.0, Clktraye, Memoirs2000, Phonersetup, Timemansetup, Windesktools 3

IN PRINT

Paint Shop Pro v7.0, RW_Win32

INTERNET

Bulletproof Ftp 2.0, Filefunnel v1.0b1, Getright Mail Control v1.0 B1, Tcpnetview 1.0.7, Webferret 3.0, Aol95, Cache/cooockie&window Cleaner 6.14, Dontpanic 3, Ebook1, Editbrow 4.1.7, Leggimi, Eprompter 1.03, Netsonic, Offline Explorer 1.4, Super Surf, Webzip 360_01

OFFICE

Typhoon MT, Letter Writer, FineReader 4.0b Professional, Virtual Secretary 2000, 602Pro PC SUITE, StarLogin (French), Multimedia Greeting Card Maker

RESOURCES

Adobe Acrobat Reader v4.05, Aladdin Expander v5.1, Desktop Architect 2.01.0, Microsoft DirectX Drivers 8.0, Shockwave And Flash Player (32-bit) 8d204 / 5r30, VB Runtime Files, Winamp 2.71, WinZip 8.0, Windows Media Player v7.0, Microsoft Windows Media Player Power-toys, MS Word 97 Viewer, Yahoo! Messenger 1.0

SOFTWARE

Asp File Uploader v1.1, Hex Workshop, Icon Bank v4.0, Iconforge32, Visual Basic Project Analyzer v3.1, Vopcom Radius Client v1.0, Fastype For Windows v5.4, Helpgen Windows Help File Generator v1.21, Worldbuilder3, Acn Station v2.1, All My Mp3s v1.7, Napster 2.0 Beta 8, Pcdj Broadcaster, Power MP3 Studio v1.0, Sonique v1.808, Voquette Media Manager 1.5 Beta, Winamp v2.71

UPDATES

Icuil (I See You Too) v4.84, McAfee v5.15, Norton1220116

UTILITIES

Clone Master v2.19, Folder Guard v4.12, Mypasswords v3.0, Namewiz v3.1, Ranish Partition Manager, Superfssst! 98, Ultimate Zip Cracker, v-GO_password, Winword Password Recovery Tool v1.5a



logins and passwords, and uses the list to automatically fill in login dialogs. Also handles online credit card transactions, desktop security, and more

HOME

Windesk Tools 3 helps you manage your desktop while Phonersetup manages your phone book. Other software featured include Catraxx 2000 v4.51 and Sf Cd Cover 2.02

OFFICE

Create your own greeting cards with animation and music



using Multimedia Greeting Card Maker. Also featured are Typhoon MT, Letter Writer, FineReader 4.0b, etc

IN PRINT

A-LIST

Reviews of five best-performing hardware and software tested in different categories

TEST DRIVE

Laptops and System Utilities are on the test bench this time

PREVIOUS ISSUE

The January 2001 issue in .pdf format

PRICEWATCH

Your guide to the latest computer component prices

MINDMATTERS

E-BOOKS

Includes *Windows Scripts 5.5*, a

release of Windows scripts, *Beyond Search Engines, How to be more Successful* and other topical e-books on a variety of subjects

WHITEPAPERS

FLASH MEMORY

From basic overview to Flash CFI Specs, MDES, RAM Specs and Flash Path User guide, these whitepapers provide insights into Flash Memory

TIPS AND TRICKS

Sponsored by



Become a pro in Dreamweaver and Fireworks through a cool set of tips

CD 2-Playware

GALLERY

A collector's paradise. Includes a great array of wallpapers, Winamp skins, movie trailers, Windows themes and screen-savers

ARENA

THE GAMING ZONE

Includes reviewed demo versions, gaming cheats and some cool games

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

A game with incredible 3D technology, an engine featuring coloured lighting, variable translucency objects, and stunning particle effects

WCW NITRO

A realistic, 3D wrestling game for the PC. This blockbuster title features over 60 WCW and NWO superstars with their signature moves, taunts and rants

DEER HUNT CHALLENGE

A new hunting game that taps the action, goal-oriented levels, and impressive environments of 'shooter' style gameplay.

NEWSLETTERS

WINDOWS

This roundup brings you a wide range of Windows-specific information. Also contains samples and subscription info



SURGE

Includes the latest, coolest, free MP3 tunes and music software. Featured are Angina P, Triptonic and Cheryl Bliss

CONNECT

YOUR WEB DIRECTORY

SITE MAP

Valentine's Day ahoy! In keeping with the mood of the



month, we bring you a site called MereMehboob.com

BOOKMARK

Your monthly theme-based guide to great Web sites. This time it is anti-Valentine sites, so if you want to rant against mush time, we'll help you do it

INDIA SITES

Some work, some play. Munshikaka.com shows you how to manage your finances, Navinmail.com offers phone calls abroad at local rates, and Talatmahmood.com for fans of the legendary singer

DROOLMAAL

Go ahead, drool unashamedly at some of the coolest MP3 players on the circuit



VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2

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◆ How to contact us

EDITORIAL

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Send a complete working copy of the product (not a 'trial' or 'demo' version) to the CHIP Test Centre. Only products that are currently available in the Indian market will be considered. The products must have the complete name of the manufacturer or developer, details regarding the name of the model and its type and the end-user price. Product brochure and a complete specification sheet must be included, along with the name of a person to be contacted for information.

CHIP CD

Contact Milind Bandekar, Content Co-ordinator, Multimedia (milind_bandekar@jasubhai.com) for inclusion of software on the CHIP CD. A write-up detailing the features of the software, complete loading instructions and a letter certifying that the product is original must accompany the software. The software



must also have the complete address, telephone number and e-mail of the developer.

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E-mail: Any queries or problems regarding the CHIP CD, subscriptions or other problems can be mailed to help@chip-india.com



Pager: 9623-987273 at Mumbai

Pager: 9624-329229 at Pune, Hyderabad and Bangalore

Post: If sent by post, please mark 'Customer Service'. In case of subscription problems, please mention the subscription particulars.

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NEWS PULSE CHIP FEBRUARY 2001

Open source, superstar!

Yep, open source is a movie star and Linux is its face. Released in January, the movie *Antitrust* chronicles the saga of a young programmer hired by a giant software company. While working there, he discovers the company's agenda to dominate at any cost, and then it's kid programmer versus big time corporation. Featuring computers running GNOME on Linux, and a Web site (www.antitrustthemovie.com) that has C++ source code in the background, it might just appeal to Linux geeks.

hypethesis

Tahoe

▲ What is it?

It's a new group collaboration/knowledge management server, now called SharePoint. It actually attempts to fill in the role of a content management portal on an intranet, collating information from various sources and has the ability to publish data in a Dashboard SDK format.

▲ Who created it?

Microsoft.

▲ Why?

Because they finally woke up to the fact that Exchange may be good for message-based collaboration, but many tasks involve projects with teams that are not served too well by messaging. Also, it just happens that competitor Lotus is releasing a similar product called Discovery, to complement their Notes/Domino platform.

▲ Where can I find it?

Download RC1 of Tahoe from www.microsoft.com/sharepoint

Microsoft hardens on piracy

The next version of Windows, Whistler, will come with an anti-piracy feature. Already incorporated in an earlier test version, this feature requires the OS to be activated either by phone, mail or the Internet within a short period of being installed. The activation will record installation details and prevent installation/activation of Whistler on another machine from the same CD. This is similar to the mechanism that Microsoft tried out with Office 2000 upgrades last



year. Microsoft plans on rolling out similar 'activation' requirements for all its products in the future. Of course, there is the possibility of the activation code being hacked, but Microsoft is targeting the casual copying that occurs inadvertently in homes and small businesses. In a slumping PC market, it just might make a difference to their bottom line.

Xerox is not bankrupt...

...yet. When Xerox hired the Blackstone Group, the *New York Post* reported that they were going to act as bankruptcy advisors. A Xerox spokesperson denied the report, saying that Xerox has \$1.4 billion cash, enough to keep the company going for now. Xerox runs the PARC unit, famous as the place where many of modern computing's fundamental inventions and discoveries have

been made. PARC is also a classic study of how not to make money, allowing others to use its technology to leapfrog Xerox.

Xerox has been in financial trouble for a while now, having spent \$7 billion of borrowed money and selling out its partnership with Fuji in China for \$500 million. They plan to sell off another \$4 billion in assets and cut \$1 billion in costs in order to survive.

Intel Outside

Not content with the chips inside the box, Intel now wants to put its sticker on stuff you can attach to the PC. Intel has been making PC add-ons for some time now, but never really promoted them. Devices like PC cameras to complement its video conferencing software and the toy digital microscope were as far as Intel was willing to go, but Craig Barrett is now quite keen on looking at the PC in a totally different role than previous times.

Intel launched a portable digital music player and showed prototypes of wireless Internet access devices. Barrett looks at the player as well as the Pocket PC camera as consumers of the processing muscle the Pentium 4 brings to the



Illustration: Ram

desktop. Encoding audio music from CDs or editing video are among the most heavy applications for any processor.

By adding external functionality, Intel is trying to enhance the value of a PC and hopefully boost the flagging PC market.

metrics

▶ **98 per cent**

Asians do not have Internet access

▶ **99.5 per cent**

Africans do not have Internet access

Be sounds happy

While BeOS made a splash, it didn't get Be Inc much by way of revenue. BeIA looks all set to do exactly the opposite. BeIA is the OS repackaged to work with Internet appliances, capitalising on its strengths of a small footprint, quick booting and efficient software. The first BeIA devices are on their way with Sony unveiling the eVilla desktop appliance that has a monitor in 'portrait' mode, to make reading Web pages easier.

Not only can you run BeIA on a Web access terminal, you can even run it on your stereo. Be released the Home Audio Reference Platform (HARP) that defines how vendors can use BeIA to build components that connect to the Internet to get music, play it on the device and even store it locally. HARP even includes a specification for digital music publishers to enable subscription or pay-per-track mechanisms for their content.

Airline taps Web site

In a precedent-setting decision, a judge in the US has found Hawaiian Airlines guilty of tapping the communications of a pilot working for them. The pilot, who was criticising the management, has a secure Web site. A vice-president of the airlines logged in to the site using another pilot's login credentials. The judge ruled that this constitutes eavesdropping because the Web site stores communication, which is 'in transit'.

Obtaining access to a site by hacking or stealing passwords is recognised as illegal, but with this decision, the scope of what gets classified as unauthorised access in the US is now far more comprehensive. Logging in to a Web site with someone else's account, even if obtained legally, can be a punishable crime.



Illustrations: Mahesh Benkar

Redalert

Merging with MS Outlook

It's no secret that Microsoft Outlook is an application that e-mail worm writers find a juicy target. To make it a tougher nut to crack, Microsoft issued a security patch that blocks access to the address book and refuses to open many types of attachments.

But that is not all it does. The patch creates a situation that many applications are not designed to handle. Installing the patch prevents or severely hampers other Office applications from integrating with Outlook. For example, performing a MailMerge with Word involves clicking a confirmation dialog for every address after a 5 second delay.

Solution? Don't install the patch, use a good anti-virus instead.

Article ID: Q262634
(Microsoft knowledge base)

Weird virus

PE_WEIRD is a delivery tool. It infects Windows programs like a regular virus, but its purpose is not to do any damage. It is a courier for a BackOrifice style backdoor program that lets a hacker perform some tasks on your PC from a remote location. The program targets Windows Explorer immediately upon activation.

It copies Explorer.exe to a file with a one-letter extension like Explorer.1 and infects the copied file. It adds an entry in Wininit.ini to swap the infected version of the file over the existing Explorer.exe when Windows restarts.

When the infected Explorer comes online, the virus writes out a new file with a randomised name that is the backdoor server application and infects all programs in the Windows directory.

quicktake

Mahesh Prakriya, Lead Program Manager, .NET Frameworks Team

▲ What exactly is .NET?

.NET is about culmination of Web services. You can design Web sites and applications effortlessly on top of this framework. Basically, .NET is a series of products and services. Let us take for instance an operating system. It offers you a wide range of services such as file system service that lets you create, delete and manage all files.

Similarly, we provide a set of services for developers that acts as a basic building block for application development. When you design an application, you don't worry about the underlying process.

▲ How does C# and .NET stack up against Java?

It reminds me of the mid-90s when Internet Explorer had 20 per cent market share and Netscape had 80 per cent market share.



Mahesh Prakriya
PROGRAM MANAGER,
.NET Frameworks

Now .NET is in the same boat. Java has been popularised for its cross-platform support and portability is one feature that boosted it. Yet, there is no single real-time application written in Java, that has proved its portable nature. A classic instance being the failure of 'javagator'. Currently, .NET applications work on all Windows platform, which forms the largest chunk of the market and we are now targeting Windows64.

I give up

The Chief of Staff, White House announced that the government has determined that it can no longer limit the ability of other countries to obtain high performance computers. It is therefore easing export restrictions to acknowledge this fact. Given the performance levels of even desktop computers these days, constructing or buying a high performance computer is a trivial matter already, and it will only get even more tougher for the US to contain their spread in the future.

Instead, the US government is going to focus on restricting the export of software. They are increasing restrictions to specifically control access to critical nuclear and military software that could possibly pose a threat.

realitybites

“The compiler is often more important to system stability than the kernel”



Linux Torvalds, The originator of Linux, commenting on a post in the Linux Kernel Mailing List about a compiler problem in Red Hat 7.0 that makes it output incompatible code.

Now that Red Hat dominates the Linux distribution market, it's probably time for them to 'embrace and extend' some standards.

“They are brilliant. They told me that within five minutes they can hack the (Indian) defence ministry Web site...”

Dewang Mehta, President, NASSCOM, commenting on the choice of young teenagers to assist in cracking down on hackers.

If that is so, then maybe they should hire more teenagers to run our country's defence IT infrastructure as well...

“If there are 150 million PCs sold a year, you want peripherals and attachments that are ultimately in the tens of millions per year”



Craig Barrett, CEO, Intel, explaining why his company is launching a range of digital devices, including an MP3 player.

Sell the PC, then make stuff to use that PC. Sounds like Intel is picking a leaf out of Gillette's book.

Crusoe serves up a Sledge Hammer

AMD is working out a tie-up with Transmeta to use Crusoe processors to develop its new server class processors. AMD and Transmeta are competitors in the x86 compatible processor space, so this new alliance is going to be quite complicated.

AMD is working on a 64-bit processor called Sledge-Hammer that will go up against Intel's IA64 server processors, of which Merced is the first generation. For a processor to be successful, it must have software that will work on it, so it is common practice to send out simulators in advance to software developers. This is where AMD finds itself in a bind. Simulating an advanced processor in software is a very computing-intensive job, which reduces the speed of the simulator to a crawl.

With the Crusoe's chameleon-like code-morphing technology, Transmeta can turn out pseudo-Sledgehammer chips that work at a much

more useful speed. In return Transmeta might get a peek into AMD's technology and a licence to use some of it in their next chip.

At the same time, it is computing major IBM which has ended one Transmeta project with Taiwan's Quanta computer (Quanta does a whole lot of notebook production for IBM) to produce a notebook computer using the Crusoe computer. This notebook computer was supposed to have used software instead of on-chip circuitry to do most of the computing.

thermometer

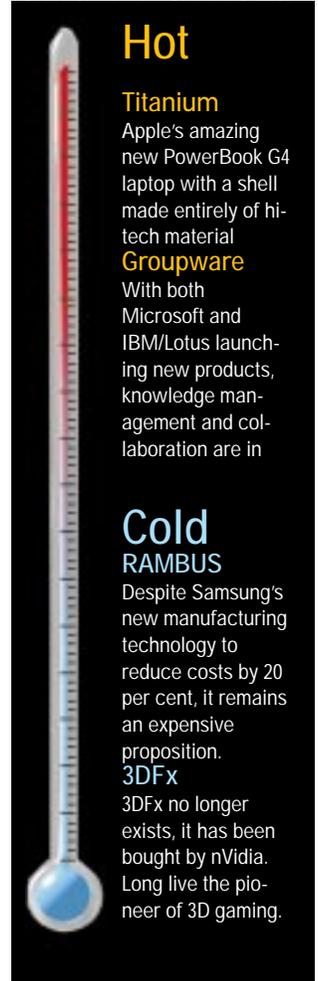
Hot

Titanium

Apple's amazing new PowerBook G4 laptop with a shell made entirely of hi-tech material
Groupware
With both Microsoft and IBM/Lotus launching new products, knowledge management and collaboration are in

Cold
RAMBUS

Despite Samsung's new manufacturing technology to reduce costs by 20 per cent, it remains an expensive proposition.
3DFx
3DFx no longer exists, it has been bought by nVidia. Long live the pioneer of 3D gaming.

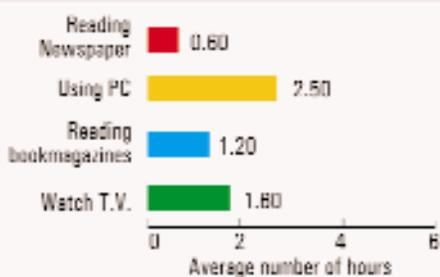


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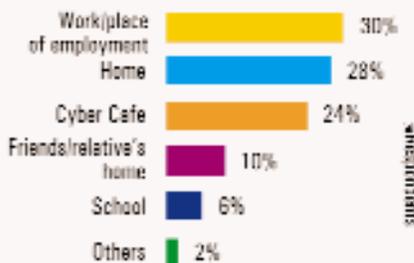
INDIA INTERNET WORLD

Indian Internet users are getting more access through home and work environments and spend more time using a computer than any other entertainment device at home.

Time devoted to various activities by an Internet user on a typical day



Main points of Internet access



Source: IDC

with little fanfare, brings plenty of new features ◆ Microsoft employees claim \$5 billion in discrimination case ◆ Toysmart will destroy

Napster in court, again

But this time around, they are doing the suing. Now that they are turning into a legitimate, money-charging business, they are trying to protect their logo. They have filed a case



against the owners of napster-store.com to stop them selling clothes and stickers with the Napster 'cat with headphones' that is being marketed as an 'official' source for Napster material. Napster, of course, is still the target of a case against unauthorised copying and file-sharing of digital music over the Internet.

The real Texas deal

RealAudio will soon be streaming out of mobile phones and Internet Appliances, if Texas Instruments (TI) has any chips in there. RealNetworks is making a push into embedded chips on the little devices that are so popular these days.

Now that it is facing strong competition from Windows Media on desktop PCs and the

PC market is saturating, RealNetworks' strategy is to get into the hardware of Internet appliances. Having teamed up with TI, their Codec is going to be burned into high performance low-power special purpose digital signal processors that TI makes. With this agreement, TI gains a strong foothold in the streaming media business as well.

Sibling rivalry

Just months after separating US Robotics (USR) from the core company, 3Com is facing a rival it helped create. USR is a well-known name in modems and data communications that 3Com bought out a couple of years ago. Just in time to see the modem market fall out as speeds peaked at 56 Kbps and high speed broadband access became affordable. The acquisition of USR turned into a major problem as the low value modem business dragged down the parent company.

3Com spun off USR into a separate company to get rid of the modem product line from its balance sheet. USR, looking for survival, is now aggressively expanding its product lines to compete in the parent company's highest growth area. It is working at products in broadband, wireless and home-networking solutions-just what 3Com didn't need.

DDoS ON IRC

Undernet is down. Undernet is one of the largest free Internet Relay Chat service networks with approximately 2.2 million users, all of whom have been effectively denied their communication channel. The network is under attack from what appears to be Romanian hackers, using a Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) technique similar to the one that brought down many large sites last year. The attacks on Undernet servers



have been massive often in excess of 100 Mbps.

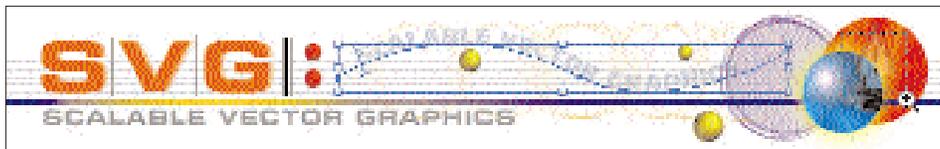
DDoS attacks involve hundreds of machines controlled to saturate the data-carrying capacity of the Internet connections to a server. These attacks are extremely difficult to block by their very nature. This particular sustained attack went up to 100 Mbps at some of the ISPs hosting Undernet servers, disabling even their Web services. As a result, many ISPs are shutting down their IRC servers, maybe permanently, threatening the future existence of Undernet itself. The brazen ease with which such an unstoppable, catastrophic attack can occur underlines the desperate need for common international laws and processes to bring criminals to book.

tomorrowstechnology

SIZE DOESN'T MATTER

The major problem with images is that they are inflexible. Once the image is drawn, enlarging or reducing the size severely impacts picture quality.

tion' that creates a document object model (DOM) out of vector graphic components similar to the HTML DOM, that can be manipulated,



ty. This can become a very difficult problem for Web designers, because they have to handle screen resolutions varying from 640x480 to over 1024x768 pixels, while maintaining the appearance of the page. Currently it is almost impossible to do this because of the image sizing problem, but Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) aims to fix that. The standard which is a W3C candidate recommendation, is an 'XML applica-

stretched or even animated. SVG images can have Cascading Style Sheets applied to them and can be manipulated through scripting.

This encroaches very much into Macromedia Flash's territory, but this happens to be a completely open specification so the browser guys can simply include the viewer instead of requiring a download, and anyone can make the tools to create SVGs.

I Want What I Want

Dear Gourav,
I readily identified with your editorial 'In Praise of Tinkering' in the December 2000 issue. Tinkering is so acutely discouraged from our childhood that we soon lose the spirit of adventure and never know the joy of discovery by exploration. Take the example of branded computers from companies such as HP and Compaq. These companies provide pre-loaded operating systems and never provide the original installation CD. The original Windows 98 OEM CD and other OS installation CDs have lots

of hidden goodies such as the TweakUI (Windows), PhotoEditor, Office shortcut bar and different images for the Help character (for Office). These are lost forever to buyers of branded computers. Vendors should provide clear information to allow the buyer to mix and match (perhaps with a little help) and choose the best combination of hardware and software. For those of us who want to tinker with their PC, is there a solution?

KAUSIK DATTA
Via e-mail

CHIP

Dear Kausik

You are right about tinkering being discouraged, but don't lose hope. For a person interested in making his own road—like a well-known 4x4—there are always options.

You can ask for the OEM version of Windows 98 separately, which would cost you an additional amount (about Rs 3,250). If you don't want to do that you can download small utilities such as TweakUI (download size about 300 Kb) from www.zdnetindia.com or other software download sites. In fact, you will find that the two CDs that accompany CHIP carry most kinds of software such as anti-virus software and utilities, especially for power users who will not let companies dictate what they should use.

Spammed!

Dear

Mr Jaswal,

A couple of months ago, I subscribed to some online newsletters offered by an Indian company [name deleted]. When I found that the newsletters were not suitable for me, I tried to unsubscribe myself from the service. Despite having followed the unsubscribe instructions mentioned in the newsletters, I continue to receive them. I have repeatedly requested the company to unsubscribe me from their mailing list, but to no avail.

This is nothing short of spamming. I pay to access the Internet. By making me download their newsletters into my mailbox, the company is not only wasting my time, but also my money. This is unethical and grossly unprofessional on their part. If they had tried doing this in the USA, they would have been hounded by negative publicity.

SUBRATA RAY
Via e-mail

CHIP

Dear Subrata,

I completely agree. Living in a bandwidth-starved nation, unwanted HTML newsletters are not a minor nuisance, but a major irritant.

However, if a company fails to provide a satisfactory solution, here are a few things you could do:

■ Report the company as a spammer to the ISP that hosts the site. Go to NetworkSolutions.com, do a WHOIS lookup on the site's domain and note down the name of the ISP hosting the site. This will be at the bottom of the output, under the name-server field. If, for example, the name server listed is NS1.SOMEISP.COM, send mail to abuse@someisp.com (or abuse@whatever-isp.com) with complete details of your issues with said company, including the last bit of spam they sent you (with complete message headers), and responses if any to unsubscribe requests. Most ISPs take spam reports very seriously, and might have the Web site shut down if your complaint is found to have merit.

■ Alternatively, you can also report this incident to the Indian chapter of the Coalition Against Unauthorized Commercial Email (CAUCE) and have them handle the situation. Their site address is <http://india.cauce.org>.

■ Yet another spam resource centre is the Mail Abuse Prevention System (MAPS) located at www.mail-abuse.org.

This should work. And finally, when you have exhausted all legitimate means of protest (and only after you have done this), you may want to resort to an e-mail version of Gandhiji's famous *dharna* or 'sit-in'.

Get the e-mail IDs of the CEO of the company and a few members of the senior management team and enlist a few of your friends to send them peaceful, polite, protest letters at the rate of about 300 a day.

The Subscriber's Law of Dharma

Dear Gourav,

You don't do justice to your subscribers. Each new issue carries a better subscription offer, which leaves one wondering if one should have waited a few more months before renewing subscription. I renewed my subscription in January 2001 and in that very issue I discovered that those subscribing from February 2001 would get a free gift (CHIP Gold CD, which I got too) plus a 'Bonanza' pack!

This is quite unfair. Please make the gifts available (even if at a price) to the existing CHIP subscribers, so that they don't regret their decision of having subscribed earlier.

SUMAN GHOSH
Via e-mail



CHIP

Dear Suman,

Unfortunately, you're right. We do try to give our subscribers better options every month.

But fret not about what the guy subscribing in February 2001 gets. Think of it this way: when you renew your subscription in January 2002 [as I hope ;-)] you will get something far better than the poor soul who subscribed in December 2001!

The Buddhist-minded among us will call it the inescapable *chakra* of life....

Send your letters marked 'Readers Letters' to the CHIP office:
D-222/2, MIDC, TTC Industrial Estate, Om Sagar Building, Nerul,
Navi Mumbai 400 706
Phone: 022-7629191/9200; Fax: 022-7629224
E-mail: readersletters@chip-india.com

Tech shock

Dear Gourav,
I was shocked to see the change in CHIP. Has it changed from a computer magazine to a technology magazine? Though computers and technology go hand in hand, they are not the same. When I subscribed to CHIP, I subscribed to a computer magazine not a technology magazine. Changes in design are fine, but you should be consistent about your focus.

MIHIR MODI

Via e-mail

Play the Hidden Card

Dear Gourav,
As your Agent 001 rightly points out in 'Trotting for Graphics' (January 2001), most dealers don't know what they are talking about. However, there is an element of truth in the prices the dealer is quoting. The price quoted may seem darned low to you, but they do hold good as these graphics cards may be assembled with the same chipset as the original card, but made by an unknown company in Taiwan or China. Such cards usually come minus the manual and other accessories. Granted, their performance will be lower than the originals, but the discount is tempting. My friends who have such cards have found the performance acceptable, rather commendable for the price.

DEEP JOY MAJUMDAR

Via e-mail

All the 'Best'

Sir,
Every month you test and rate many hardware and software products. If I buy the best in every category (HDD, motherboard, monitor, processor, etc) and assemble them, will I get a super system?

PANKAJ

Via e-mail



CHIP

Dear Mihir,

I must compliment you on your insightful observation.

The intention is, indeed, to make CHIP into what its new tagline says: 'Your Best Guide to Digital Technology'.

I am sure you would agree that technology is inextricably linked to the lives of most of us. As you would agree, MP3s are an important part of your 'computing' experience. Which is why no reader has objected to carrying reviews or workshops on MP3. Despite the fact that MP3, being an audio format, is more a part of your music experience than your 'computer' experience.

This is just one example of how technology is the peg to which many of our experiences—social contact (chat), communication (e-mail), knowledge acquisition (Internet), business planning (spreadsheets)—are tied.

With the increasing digitisation of almost all kinds of technology—our mother's washing machine possibly has more computing power than an IBM PC of 1981—it is no longer possible to see technology and computers as being separate.

In fact, ignoring this change in how technology and computers affect us would have been foolhardy. Therefore, it was important to redefine the field that CHIP covers, so that it continues to be relevant to our readers in this new environment.

CHIP

Dear Deep Joy,

The article tries to highlight the challenges that customers face when they go out to buy a product. Especially with shady dealers often trying to outwit them.

Why does this happen? Usually because the buyer is dumb. The article attempts to change this.

We are not trying to paint dealers in a bad light. The technology products channel is a very important part of the computer industry, which is why our company also has a qualified circulation magazine called *Computer Reseller News* for this audience.

CHIP

Dear Pankaj,

Let me ask you, if you take Karishma Kapoor's figure, Aishwarya Rai's eyes, Kajol's lips and [please place your favourite women's favourite features here], would you get the perfect girl? Well... Yes, you would. And No, you wouldn't.

'Perfect' should mean perfect for you. The 'Perfect PC' for a gamer means something very different from the 'Perfect PC' for a programmer.

In addition, you also need to make sure that the components you choose are compatible with one another. For example, you can't integrate a Coppermine processor with an Athlon motherboard.

Goof Ups

◆ Zero they say has no value, but we discovered the value of it when we printed the price of Creative GeForce GTS card as Rs 1,950 (and to top it marked it as expensive). Sorry guys, the price is Rs 19,500.

Notice any goof-ups? Write to goof@chip-india.com

Short Bytes

CHIP fans ahoy!

Hi,

I have made a CHIP fan site (www.geocities.com/chipfans) where all CHIP fans can get together.

PRASANTH

Via e-mail

One two ka five

Hi,

Do you realise what you've just done? Thanks a gazillion for that. Now I know you will be giving away EIGHT CDs in your Anniversary issue this April. Please... five at least! Well, yeh reader *mange* more!

ABBAS IQBAL LASANIA

Via e-mail

WOW-ed by the CD

Dear Gourav,

Kudos to your team for spicing up CHIP and making it the undisputed 'Navigator through Digital Technology'! The added features in the magazine are cool, but the CD is 'WOW!' I never expected such a revolutionary change in it. Two CDs is fine, but the new interface and the extra punch—workshop, songs, trailers—are all trend-setting.

Keep the goodies coming!

R PRASANNA

Via e-mail

Stop dieting!

Dear Gourav,

Congratulations! The 'new look' of our CHIP is amazing. But you have decreased the number of pages. Don't do that. Readers would like to read a 'fat' CHIP.

HARSHIT GARG

Via e-mail ■