

BIG cup of JAVA for three!

The news of AOL buying out Netscape came as no real surprise. I heard a whisper as much about four months ago 'off' the record. I thought the source of this information had gone loco in the head, but it did make sense in the long run but not at the time to me.

Netscape's portal site 'NetCenter' has proved a massive hit with business users the world over. When Netscape gave its browser code away for free it needed a new challenge, this gave birth to the portal power plan. Get people to your site then sell them your services, great idea and Netscape have plodded along quite happily with this.

osing out to Microsloth in the browser wars was a bloody nose for Netscape but they proved their steel by continuing down a different path.

AOL on the other hand also has a large portal site but aimed at the buyer rather than the seller. So with one swoop of AOL's mighty chequebook and pen Netscape has joined the family.

So there's the story...well not quite. AOL did not buy Netscape just to have large hit counters. eCommerce is the buzz word for '99, you'll hear it everywhere. Behind the Netscape deal AOL had just about signed a deal with Sun Microsystems. Sun has always fancied its chances with a browser to implement pure Java its way [take a look at the details of Microsoft's latest compliance tactic at www.microsoft.com/java]. Microsoft needs to look worried, at last it's got good competition.

AOL, Sun and Netscape are not truly great companies but jointly they have the potential to shift ecommerce into overdrive. With analysts predicting X amount of billions being


generated and shifted online over the next five years, this put the three companies in a great position and wanting a big slice of the action, but you have to ask yourself monopolistic or self-preservation?

Sun will now develop, reshape and spawn a new business friendly browser/ecommerce package within a few months I reckon. There are many things speculated but until now still no hard facts as to what will and won't be in the next release of Netscape Communicator and Navigator, maybe a new name but definitely a new outlook. The gloves are off!

Watch for Yahoo, Alta Vista and eXcite moving hands over the next 3 months.

Watch out for Microsoft waving its huge bulging chequebook to catch up with the trusty trio.

The DoJ case might make a better Microsoft company at the end of the day, look what happened to IBM a decade ago!

 Darren Edwards
Editor 1984 Online Magazine
<darren@1984-online.com>