



THE MONTHLY PLANET



HEADLINE NEWS



MARS PROBE LANDING

Houston Chronicle

After a seven-month journey from Earth, a camera-laden NASA spacecraft swung into orbit around Mars on Friday(10/03/2006) to unravel the mystery surrounding the planet's changing face.



GOOGLE CREATES NEW ONLINE OFFICE

SEO Blog

Does anyone remember how, less than a year ago, several commentators suggested Google was compiling a series of products that could emulate an online operating system?



THE BUBBLE BURSTS ON COLD FUSION

Financial Times

Doubt was cast this week on the credibility of experiments that seemed to suggest potentially limitless amounts of energy could be derived from collapsing bubbles.



PHISHERS DODGE SITE SHUTDOWNS

InformationWeek

In an escalation in the battle between fraudsters and security firms that track them, some phishers have started using a tactic called smart site redirection to stay a step ahead.



CASSINI FINDS WATER ON SATURN'S MOON

CNN

Scientists think liquid water is spewing out of these fractures on the southern pole of Enceladus. The Cassini space probe has found evidence of geysers erupting from underground pools of liquid water.



DOWNLOAD MOVIES FROM AMAZON.COM

Red Herring

Amazon.com is negotiating with three major movie studios about offering digital downloads of films and TV programs, according to reports Friday.



MICROSOFT OPEN'S NEW SEARCH SITE

PC Magazine

Microsoft today(08/03/2006) opened up a new beta of its Live.com start and search page, along with a variety of new tools. This is clearly still a beta, but the new site has a number of very interesting new features.



MOZILLA RAKING IN MILLION'S?

Internetnews.com wonders about the money Firefox is making in revenue thanks to Google. From the article: 'Mozilla gets paid a publicly undisclosed amount for each Google search query made from Firefox by a user.' This revenue is used to pay the recently formed Mozilla Corporation's 40 full-time equivalent employees and fund project and infrastructure development.'



NEW DANGER TO PC'S DUE TO VM-ROOTKITS

Tenacious Hack writes "According to a story on eWeek, lab rats at Microsoft Research and the University of Michigan have teamed up to create prototypes for virtual machine-based rootkits that significantly push the envelope for hiding malware and maintaining control of a target OS. The proof-of-concept rootkit, called SubVirt, exploits known security flaws and drops a VMM (virtual machine) (monitor) underneath a Windows or Linux installation. Once the target operating system is hoisted into a virtual machine, the rootkit becomes impossible to detect because its state cannot be accessed by security software running in the target system.



HAS DELETING FILES BECOME A CRIME?

Cemaco writes "A former employee of International Airport Centers, who is currently embroiled in a legal dispute with them, returned his company laptop as required. Hoping to find incriminating evidence, I.A.C. attempted to retrieve deleted information from the laptop in question with no success. This employee had beaten them to the punch. He had used 'secure delete' software, in order to make sure nothing could be recovered. He is now being charged with a violation of the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act."

THE FULL STORY ON GOOGLE



By John Fontana, Network World

Google, which late last year dodged rumors it was developing productivity applications, can no longer make that claim as Thursday it acquired Writely, an online word processing application. While the Google press site is mum on the news, Writely, which is the first product developed by a small Silicon Valley startup called Upstartle, said on its Web site that it has shut down new registrations because it has been acquired by Google. Terms of the deal were not disclosed and Google did not respond to requests for an interview.

Writely is a web-based, collaborative document editor, but Upstartle believes it is an entry point to a new way to manage documents, projects and websites online. The software is offered today as a free service in the software-as-a-service model. Upstartle co-founder Sam Schillace told Network World in December that Writely planned to introduce a premium level of service, presumably for a fee, that was geared more toward corporations and corporate workgroups and would include document and user specific permissions. He said it would include password protected documents and user accounts.

Writely already contains RSS integration so users can track changes made to a document and it supports full revision history on every document. Users also can post documents to a blog from Writely and they can create Web pages within the service. Upstartle co-founder Claudia Carpenter wrote on her blog Thursday, "Yes, we've been acquired by Google, and we're really excited about this for many, many reasons." She said the No. 1 priority is to "maintain (and improve) the reliability, privacy and security of the Writely service for our current users."

She said Writely would soon move to Google's architecture in anticipation of a flood of new users. Current Writely customers will still be able to use the site. In October, Google announced a pending partnership with Sun and ignited buzz that it was developing a set of online productivity applications to rival Microsoft. The buzz was way off the mark as the deal centered on distribution of Google's toolbar with Sun's Java Runtime Environment software.

But at the time, Goldman Sachs analyst Rick Sherlund wrote in a research note: "We suspect both Yahoo and Google will want to extend their e-mail products to look a lot richer and more like Microsoft Outlook (adding calendar and contact management to e-mail) and may decide to throw in spreadsheet and word processing capabilities while they are at it to be more competitive with Office."

Writely could be that ingredient in the mix since it is an applications developed using the Asynchronous JavaScript + XML (AJAX), a set of programming controls that allows user to create Web-based applications that behave like desktop software. Google has exploited AJAX for some of its most eye-popping services such as GMail and Google Maps.

Writely was not the only news Google made on Thursday. The company announced it had agreed to pay US\$90 million to settle a class-action lawsuit over "click-fraud." In addition, on Tuesday the company inadvertently posted internal financial projections on its Web site, according to a story on CBS Marketwatch.com. Google disclosed that it was projecting advertising revenue would increase 58 percent from \$6 billion in 2005 to \$9.5 billion in 2006. The company said the information should not be regarded as financial guidance.



Environment News

Arctic climate change affecting marine wildlife in Bering Sea

The ecosystem in the north Bering Sea, which is a home to whales, walruses, and sea birds, is being affected to a significant degree by the warmer climate forcing marine animals to either adapt to the changing atmosphere or suffer from its consequences, a report published in the journal Science suggests.

Huge crater in Sahara shows up on satellite images

A 19-mile (31 kilometers) wide crater in the Saharan desert has shown up on satellite images and has been discovered by scientists at the Boston University. The crater, which is located in Egypt, is the largest one discovered in Sahara Desert and is huge when compared to the Meteor Crater in Arizona, which is only about 1.2 kilometers wide.

Is the volcano springing to life beneath Yellowstone?

BILLINGS, Mont - A new study by scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey says that a recently discovered surface bulge in Yellowstone National Park could be indicative of some mysterious geothermal activity underneath the surface in recent years.

Antarctica's ice sheet thinning faster than estimated

WASHINGTON - The ice sheets of Antarctica, where almost 70 percent of the world's fresh water is concentrated is rapidly shrinking, an effect that scientists say is directly linked to global warming. University of Colorado reserachers say that Antarctica lost 36 cubic miles of ice per year between 2002 to 2005.

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