



The Paper Modem

MARCH 2003 Volume 3 Issue 2

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INTERESTING SITES ON COMPUTER HOAXES & MYTHS

THE TOP 8 COMPUTER MYTHS

Since most computer problems are resolved either by random or ritualistic action on the part of the user, or by following mysterious instructions from an allegedly knowledgeable support person, it's hardly surprising that there are lots of pseudo-religious myths about PCs.

Between them, these stories can waste a lot of your time and money. Worse yet, you could become one of the myths' promulga-

tors, and exacerbate the problem! ...

Article continued in: www.dansdata.com

VIRUS HOAXES, CHAIN LETTERS AND URBAN LEGENDS

If your mother-in-law forwarded a chain letter alert, which came from her dentist, who got it from a podiatrist, who got it from his secretary's daughter, who supposedly received it at college directly from IBM's virus experts.....

Articles continued in:
<http://www.hoaxkill.com>



When all else fails, read the instructions!

There is **NO such thing as an E-mail text virus!!**

Does this sound familiar: "Don't read or open any e-mail titled *Good Times!* It will destroy your computer!" Many of you have received e-mails warning you of reading a specific e-mail sent to you going by a certain name (e.g.- "Good Times," etc.). These warnings

tell you your computer will face certain doom if you open these e-mails and read them. **THESE WARNINGS ARE A HOAX.** The truth is

Articles continued in:
<http://www.gerlitz.com/virushoax/>

Submitted by: Y. Bulger

SIX CHIX

BY RINA PICCOLO



Humor Submitted by: Cliff Farmer

Request from Nanaimo Family History Society

Nanaimo Family History Society is in the process of indexing the 1900-1922 passenger list films. This is a huge project. The more transcribers/indexers we have the faster we can produce the index. If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact the project Coordinator, Corinne Duffy at corinneduffy@telus.net or 729-0600 in the evening.



Pentium Wise, Pen & Paper foolish!

Kazaa Swaps Suits with Hollywood, Labels

By John Borland
Special to ZDNet News
January 28, 2003, 5:21 AM PT

Sharman Networks, owner of the popular Kazaa file-swapping software, has launched a legal counterstrike against the major record labels and Hollywood studios, asserting that they have "obscenely" abused their copyright powers.

In a lawsuit filed late Monday January 24th in federal court in Los Angeles, Sharman claims that major entertainment companies have colluded to drive potential online rivals out of business. The conduct should preclude the industry from being able to defend its copyrights in court, at least until the behavior is corrected, Sharman contends.

The lawsuit is a counterstrike by Sharman, which has been sued for allegedly contributing to massive online copyright infringement. Last week, a federal judge ruled that record companies and movie studios could proceed with their lawsuit against Sharman.

The entertainment industry considers Sharman to be as much an outlaw as Napster and Aimster, two file-sharing services that have been shuttered. But Sharman executives say their business is fundamentally different because the company was created to take advantage of legal online distribution.

"What the industry is incapable of doing is realizing that Kazaa is different," said Sharman attorney Rod Dorman. "Now (they) have got to face the legal consequences."

The lawsuit marks a significant development in the most critical online copyright case since the disappearance of Napster. Sharman is being sued along with Grokster and Morpheus parent Streamcast Networks. The popularity of Kazaa, the leading file-trading service in the United States, has brought it to the top of copyright holders' list of online enemies.

Sharman purchased the Kazaa software in early 2002 and planned to make money by distributing authorized, copy-protected content, its attorneys said. Other companies, however, also have entered the file-swapping business contending that their plans were legal. Early entrant Scour turned on its file-trading service only after seeking the advice of top Hollywood copyright lawyers. But that didn't prevent it from being sued and driven out of business.

The "legal consequences" Sharman is seeking are potentially severe. Sharman is asking the judge to declare the copyright holders guilty of antitrust and related violations, and to bar them from enforcing any of their copyrights.

According to the lawsuit, Sharman and a partner called Altnet met repeatedly with movie and music industry executives over the course of 2002, seeking to license copy-protected content for online distribution. Providing legal, authorized versions of popular entertainment content would help mitigate piracy on the file-swapping system, Sharman and Altnet said.

Article Submitted by: [Greg Wilson](#)



If only life had an "undo" function

MICROSOFT VS. GM

For all of us who feel only the deepest love and affection for the way computers have enhanced our lives, read on. At a recent computer expo (COMDEX), Bill Gates reportedly compared the computer industry with the auto industry and stated, "If GM had kept up with the technology like the computer industry has, we would all be driving \$25.00 cars that got 1,000 miles to the gallon". In response to Bill's comments, General Motors issued a press release stating: If GM had developed technology like Microsoft; we would all be driving cars with the following characteristics:

1. For no reason whatsoever, your car would crash twice a day.
2. Every time they repainted the lines in the road, you would have to buy a new car.
3. Occasionally your car would die on the freeway for no reason. You would have to pull over to the side of the road, close all of the windows, shut off the car, restart it, and reopen the windows before you could continue. For some reason you would simply accept this.
4. Occasionally, executing a maneuver such

as a left turn would cause your car to shut down and refuse to restart, in which case you would have to reinstall the engine.

5. Macintosh would make a car that was powered by the sun, was reliable, five times as fast and twice as easy to drive - but would run on only five percent of the roads.

6. The oil, water temperature, and alternator warning lights would all be replaced by a single "This Car Has Performed An Illegal Operation" warning light.

7. The airbag system would ask, "Are you sure?" before deploying.

8. Occasionally, for no reason whatsoever, your car would lock you out and refuse to let you in until you simultaneously lifted the door handle, turned the key and grabbed hold of the radio antenna.

9. Every time a new car was introduced car buyers would have to learn how to drive all over again because none of the controls would operate in the same manner as the old car.

10. You'd have to press the "Start" button to turn the engine off. Please share this with your friends who love - but sometimes hate - their computer!

Submitted by: Allan Forrest

Lawsuit Challenges Microsoft Licensing

By Lisa M. Bowman
Special to ZDNet News
February 10, 2003, 9:44 AM PT

A California woman is suing Microsoft, Symantec and some software retailers, claiming the companies "concocted a scheme" to mis-

lead consumers by requiring them to consent to software licensing agreements they have not read.

The suit, filed Friday February 7th, in Marin County Superior Court in San Rafael, Calif., seeks class-action status on behalf of all Californians who've bought software including Norton Antivirus 2002, Norton Systemworks and Windows XP Upgrade.



Money isn't everything, but it sure keeps you in touch with your children

Specifically, the suit, which was brought by Cathy Baker, claims that Microsoft, Symantec, CompUSA, Best Buy and other unnamed retailers don't allow people to read "shrink wrap" licenses--agreements printed inside the box or incorporated into the software itself--before they buy a product.

"Defendants acted in concert and have concocted a scheme to sell consumers in the state of California software licenses in retail stores without allowing them to review the terms and conditions of such software licenses prior to sale," Ira Rothken, Baker's lawyer, wrote in the complaint.

Further, the suit claims that people who don't accept the terms of the agreement cannot return software to the stores. According to the suit, Baker tried to return the Microsoft and Symantec software to CompUSA after refusing to consent to the licensing terms.

However, CompUSA refused to take the software back, saying the packages had been opened, according to the suit.

End-user license agreements have become a hot-button issue in the tech industry as more and more companies try to forge increasingly restrictive contracts. Some companies have tried to ban class-action lawsuits, damages or reverse engineering of their products.

In one of the few cases so far to test the limits of such agreements, a judge in New York ruled last month that Network Associates could not enforce wording that prohibited reviews of its product without prior consent.

Representatives from Symantec, Microsoft and Best Buy did not immediately respond to requests for comment. CompUSA executives could not be reached for comment.

Submitted by: [Greg Wilson](#)

Possible Messages for your Answering Machine

- Now I lay me down to sleep; Leave a message at the beep. If I should die before I wake, remember to erase the tape.
- "This is not an answering machine, this is a telepathic thought-recording device. After the tone, think about your name, your reason for calling and a

number where I can reach you, and I'll think about returning your call."

- Hello. You are talking to a machine. I am capable of receiving messages. My owners do not need siding, windows, or a hot tub, and their carpets are clean. They give to charity through the office and don't need their picture taken. If you're still with me, leave your name and number and they will get back to you.

Humor submitted by: Gord Bulger



Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss it, you will land among the stars.

Real-Life Spam Solutions

Article from the November 22, 2002 edition of the Odyssey Computers Newsletter

We all know spam is annoying, but have you thought about how much it actually costs you? If you spend, say, 10 minutes each workday identifying, deleting or otherwise dealing with spam, then you're expending some 43 hours a year--- over a week's worth of lost productivity--- on spam. If you earn \$50K/year, then the value of that lost time is something like \$1000. Of course, your actual numbers may be higher or lower depending on how much spam you get and what your time is worth, but you get the idea. Spam isn't just an irritant; it's costing us all huge amounts of time and money.

And it's getting worse: One anti-spam company, Brightmail.Com <http://www.brightmail.com>, has tracked spam worldwide for the last 18 months, and seen the volume of spam increase fivefold in that time http://www.brightmail.com/pdfs/1102_spam_attacks.pdf. Brightmail says that spam now accounts for almost 40% of the world's email traffic--- a colossal waste of bandwidth, storage, computing power, and human effort.

There's no easy solution to this because present anti-spam tools are woefully inadequate. For example, take blacklists--- a way of trying to block the email sources used by spammers: A study by the Giga Information Group <http://www.gigaweb.com/homepage/> found that the best-known blacklist, MAPS RBL ("Mail Abuse Prevention System Real-time Black List"), catches less than 25% of spam,

but blocks 34% of good mail <http://www.nwfusion.com/research/2001/0910feat.html>. In other words, it doesn't catch much spam in the first place, and then, for every spam that is blocked, it also blocks 1.4 totally valid non-spam emails!

The defenders of blacklists swear by them, usually because these users make the classic geek mistake of focusing on the details and missing the larger picture: For instance, they may see that their favorite blacklist has blocked some large absolute number of spams, and so they think it's working. But they're ignoring the fact that the blacklist is still only getting a small overall percentage of spam, and missing far more than it blocks. That still might be OK--- on the theory that blocking some spam is better than blocking none--- except for the fact that blacklists do huge amounts of collateral damage to totally innocent email. I don't see how anyone can argue that a low success rate coupled with a high error rate is anything but a grotesque failure. The defenders of blacklists don't want to face facts--- they want to believe, and so they do. But a more objective eye can see plainly that blacklists simply don't work.

OK, if not blacklists, what then?

I went looking, and rounded up information on other kinds of anti-spam filtering tools, plus info on a brand-new kind of probability-based spam analysis tool that promises to CORRECTLY identify most spam, while leaving most valid emails totally untouched--- a tool almost as good at filtering spam as you would be, if you read and individually processed each email sent to you! I then included



Honeymoon — The morning after the knot before .. *Anonymous*

information on the tools I personally use, and added the top reader-submitted anti-spam suggestions. When I was done, it was a 3,000 word, full feature-length article. It's too long for this newsletter, so I posted it at <http://www.informationweek.com/story/IWK20021115S0018>.

When you finish that article, you'll know what works---and just as importantly, what doesn't work--- in fighting spam. You have direct links so you can download and try the current best-available tools for fighting spam; and

you'll know what's coming in near-term, brand-new spam-fighting tools that just might finally dig us all out from under the avalanche of spam we're experiencing.

Please check out the article at <http://www.informationweek.com/story/IWK20021115S0018> and then follow the link at the end of that article to join in the discussion. See you there!

Submitted by: Greg Wilson with permission from Odyssey Computers

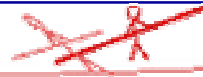


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It's just a job, Grass grows, birds fly, waves pound the sand, I beat people up — *Muhammad Ali*



Walking the Trapeze With "The Net"

Sites of Interest for this Month:

Ask and be answered:

Protonic.com <http://www.protonic.com/> Go to this site and ask a question. Chances are very good that you'll be rewarded with an answer you can use.

Fix your own printer:

<http://fixyourownprinter.com/> You can find information here with fixes for many printer problems. I found the fix for the Okidata laser printer a friend gave me. Very useful site.

Find the lyrics for a song:

Lyrics.com <http://www.lyrics.com/> Here you can look up the lyrics for a lot of songs.

Alta-Vista translations—language at your fingertips:

<http://babel.altavista.com/tr/>? Type in a word and have it translated into just about any other language. Doesn't work very well for swear words :-)

Submitted by: Wes Jackson

The World Fact Book:

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>

Submitted by: Y. Bulger

NEWS

Follow Up from Previous Meetings

At the last second monthly meeting held on January 21st., we had Tom Body of "**Your Computer Guy**" advising us on Maintaining and Upgrading our computers. Tom put on a good demo and provided some excellent tips on what to think about and what to avoid, when considering upgrading your computer.

As to Maintenance, Tom spelled out the basics including the importance of a regular defrag, Scan Disc and other ways to avoid having your machine slow down on you.

Thanks to Ben for lining up this demo and thanks to Tom Body for his guidance.

See our picture page on the web site.

An enormous thank you to Stacey Paddison & Peter Ward of **London Drugs** for once again keeping us on the edge of our seats with interest.

This meeting was an excellent source of information for those of us who intend upgrading our digital camera's to digital cams. The questions that were asked by everyone prompted good discussions and the evening passed all too quickly.

The equipment passed around was without a doubt what we all wished we could afford. Hopefully we can convince Stacey & Peter to come back soon.

Continued.....

On Tuesday Feb. 18th. We welcomed the return of the **Snoop Sisters**, Joanne Burroughs and Corinne Duffy. See www.snoopsisters.net.

They produced their usual professional demonstration and provided the Members with a great deal of very good tips, directions and useful sites on the subject of Genealogy.

Genealogy is the second biggest use of the Internet we are advised, there are a great many folk who are interested in their Family tree and Joanne

and Corinne are experts at compiling this information.

If you are interested in 'finding out where you came from' but do not have the time or the time to learn the skills involved, you should have a look at their site or explore some of the site's they provided on their handout.

Our thanks to Joanne and Corinne (The Snoop Sisters) for another fascinating evening.

HAIKU POETRY

Source: Unknown

Haiku for the tech challenged in Japan have replace impersonal and unhelpful Microsoft error messages with Haiku poetry messages. Haiku poetry has strict construction rules:

Each poem has only 17 syllables—5 syllables in the first line and, 7 in the second and ,5 in the third. They are used to communicate a timeless message, often achieving a wistful, yearning and powerful insight through extreme brevity. Here are some actual error messages from Japan. Aren't these better than "your computer has performed an illegal operation?"

- *The Web site you seek
Cannot be located
But countless more exist*

- *Chaos reigns within
Reflect, repent and reboot
Order shall return*
- *Program aborting
Close all that you have worked on
You ask for too much*
- *Windows NT crashed
I am the Blue Screen of Death
No one hears your screams*
- *Yesterday it worked
Today it is not working
Windows is like that*
- *Your file was so big
It might be very useful
But now it is gone*

Submitted by: Gloria Saunders



Happiness is a journey, not a destination.

What's happening in March 2003

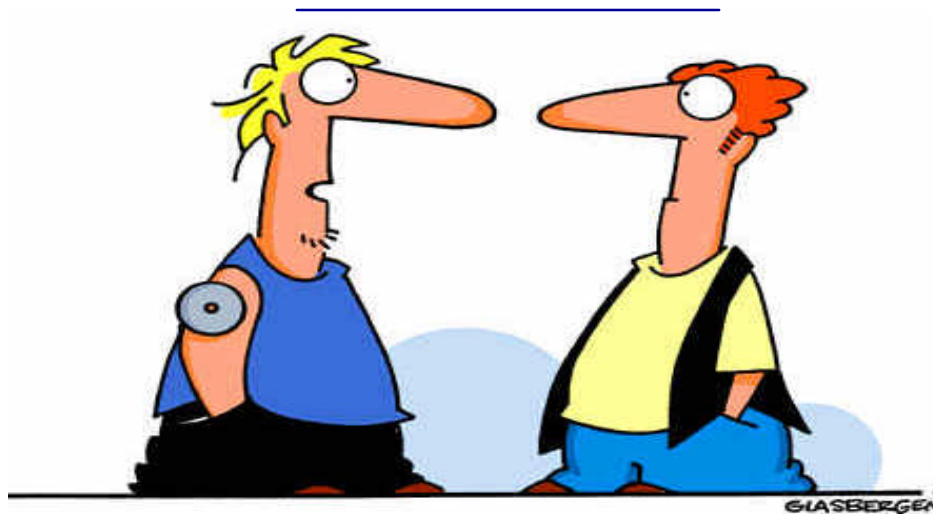


March 12th.

John Chow will be doing the presentation to our members on March 12th. John will present Windows XP and give us some insight into the program.

March 18th.

This meeting will feature Per Kristensen, Chief Technology Officer, for the City of Nanaimo. Per will expand on the web site for the city and cover the features and benefits of using this web site.



"IT'S NOT A NICOTINE PATCH, IT'S A CD-ROM.
I'M TRYING TO OVERCOME COMPUTER ADDICTION."



A real friend is one that walks in, when the rest of the world walks out

Case for LINUX is a cultural one – thus far.

One doesn't think of Microsoft as a cultural force, yet the behemoth has figured in two major cultural clashes. The first pitted Mac-Intosh against Windows loyalists; the second is a confrontation between Linux and Windows supporters. The first was limited to individuals; the second is being played out primarily in corporate life.

Linux fans are generating a lot of noise by pressing IT departments for the expanded use of the open-source system to replace existing server software, much of it made by Microsoft. The Linux crowd knows it will not prevail easily; corporations are still motivated by a business climate in which prudence, meaning conservative decision making, is prized over revolutionary thinking, as in restructuring an entire server architecture. The pro-Linux lobby argues that the open-source system is cheap (or even free), it has much better track record in security and anti-virus protection, it is exquisitely configurable, it is much more stable and it does not require high-end processors to run it.

These are compelling arguments, and sweet music to IT managers under tremendous pressure to cut costs. But IT's reasons for not dropping everything and switching to Linux are just as compelling.

Before they jump, they want to be reassured that the system is mature and would be compatible with future large-scale products, such as customer relation's management.

They like the stability of Linux, but argue that Windows servers are pretty stable now, too, and if they're patched diligently, they will be spared most viral attacks. And they also

want reassurance that it will be cost-effective to stick with the hardware on which it runs, and not face massive costs in a few years when entire systems require upgrading.

Then there are more cultural issues; Enterprises don't much like doing business with the anonymous community of code-warriors that is polishing Linux; they like to buy from dealers who can service a product. They like to know about future plans for the product instead of waiting on a loose network of propeller-heads to come up with ideas.

It's a classic clash; Linux supporters base their arguments on source code while corporate types base their decisions on how they can justify themselves to the executive suite and the shareholders, many of whom are not technically minded.

What Linux supporters need most is patience. In the current economic climate, the news about Linux may not be triumphant, though it is encouraging. A study released this week reported that total Linux server revenue doubled in the fourth quarter of 2002 from the similar period of 2001, while overall server revenue rose just 5 percent. IBM Corp alone accounted for about half that revenue – the computing giant, now concentrating on its role as a consultancy, has embraced Linux with enthusiasm.

The future of Linux servers, moreover, is getting support from an unexpected source, the end user market. A number of component packagers have come up with specially customized versions for individual desktop use – among them Red Hat, SuSe, mandrake and Lindows, which are trying to duplicate the Microsoft experience with Linux; precisely the way Apple is duplicating the Mac OS experience with FreeBSD Unix.

Continued



Love looks through a telescope, while envy looks through a microscope

Combined with the arrival of OpenOffice, the office suite that has recently been picked up by Sun Microsystems, Linux desktops are actually being designed to appeal to individuals, whose collective approval – if they grant it – should grease the wheels of the open source movement.

Still, there is much ground to cover before Linux takes over corporate computing.

Among Fortune 500 companies, Linux owns a scant 10 percent of the market, well behind Microsoft's Windows (50 percent) and Sun's Solaris (30 percent), and also has so many hearts to conquer. And a recent report from the META group, a high-tech consultancy, warned that much of the push for Linux is motivated by an emotional reaction to Microsoft.

The META Group study also said that Linux is not really "free", at least from a corporate viewpoint. "Linux requires more staffing resources and effort to match the reliability, availability and scalability of high-end Unix and Windows 2000 or XP servers." More important, whatever is saved by its free licensing deal will amount to just 2 percent or 3 percent of the total cost of ownership (TCO) of a major project of which Linux

would be only a part – such as a complete customer relations management package or an enterprise resource planning system.

But, the study concludes, TCO for Linux based operations should drop significantly when other open-source components of a major system become available – an office suite, large-scale e-mail services and a database management system.

Linux advocates counter that this stuff is either already here or well on its way.

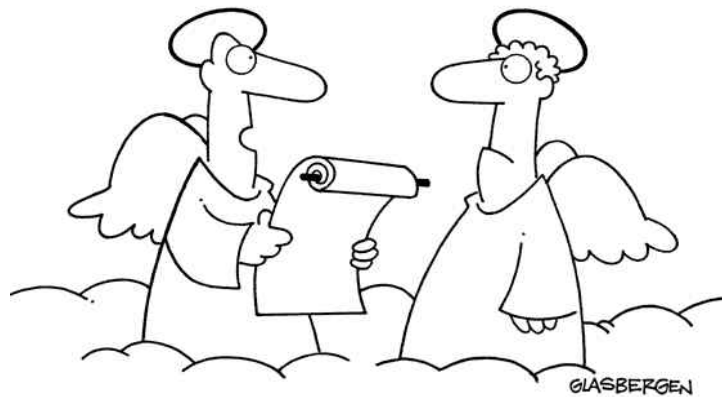
Much of this debate is one based on perception – or a corporate culture – with good arguments on both sides.

That may change soon, however, when news surfaced this week that Microsoft has applied for patents for its .Net initiative, the glue that connects different computing systems.

If Microsoft succeeds and enterprises find themselves having to pay for Web services – the generic name for .Net – then the case for Linux may no longer be a cultural one, but a simple matter of arithmetic.

Reproduced from the Globe and Mail, January 2003

Submitted by: Allan Forest



"...and you spent 5.73 years of your life deleting spam from your e-mail."



The End