



The Paper Modem

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Inside this issue:

Powell backs power-line Net service
Hushed-Up Disaster Dept.
IBM releases desktop-priced ThinkPad's
VTC Training CD-ROM
Club Contact List
What's coming up in May 2003
Review of April's meetings

Page

1/2
3
4/5
5
6
7
8
9
10
11

Powell backs power-line Net service

Reuters - April 10, 2003, 6:36 AM PT

The head of the Federal Communications Commission gave his blessing on Wednesday to an emerging technology that would provide high-speed Internet service through power lines.

FCC Chairman Michael Powell toured a house in suburban Maryland that had been set up to showcase the new service, which transmits e-mail, Web pages, telephone service and other data over the existing power grid and through standard electrical outlets.

In the living room, Powell listened to an Internet radio broadcast and watched the movie "Ice Age" on a flat-screen 42-inch television streaming from another computer miles away.

In the home office, Powell checked his voice mail over an Internet telephone and watched as a printer spat out a picture taken by a surveillance camera at the front door. He nodded approvingly at other computers scattered throughout the house that stayed online by plugging into nearby electrical outlets.

"This is within striking distance of being the third major broadband pipe into the

(Continued on page 2)



The first rule of intelligent tinkering is saving all the parts.

(Continued from page 1)

home," Powell said. "I'm a little bummed

it's not (available) in my area." Powell's visit provided a boost for a technology that after several years of false starts could soon provide consumers with another option for high-speed Internet service.

Roughly 14 percent of U.S. households subscribe to broadband service, which offers Internet speeds roughly 30 times as fast as conventional dial-up service. But existing cable-TV and telephone-based networks do not serve all neighborhoods, and analysts say high prices remain a barrier to adoption. Broadband providers like Comcast and Verizon Communications usually charge between \$40 and \$60 per month for access.

High speed for less cash?

Current Technologies, the equipment maker that set up the demonstration, hopes to offer a service for under \$30 by the end of the year, company executives said. Consumers who sign up for the service could plug into the Internet through any outlet in the house with a \$70 modem the size of a deck of cards.

Current Technologies has wired about 70 households in Potomac, Md., in a test with power provider Pepco, and is also testing the service in suburban Cincinnati.

Developers have had to overcome sev-

eral technical and regulatory hurdles. While the power lines that blanket the country can handle both electricity and Internet traffic, transformer boxes that "step down" power levels for household use tend to garble data and make it unreadable. The problem has vexed utilities and equipment makers like Nortel Networks for years.

Developers have recently found ways to overcome the issue. Current Technologies, based in Germantown, Md., uses a physical link to bypass neighborhood transformers, while other equipment makers rely on wireless links or cell phone-style technology to scramble the data and push it through the transformers.

Power companies need permission from state regulators before offering the service, but Pepco Vice President Michael Sullivan said he didn't think that would be a problem because regulators are eager to see more competition.

"The rollout could be very expeditious," he said. Powell said the FCC would try to encourage, rather than discourage, the new technology. The agency is determining whether it needs to change the way it inspects power-line equipment to ensure it works properly. "What we're trying to do is shine some bright headlights to see where there will be regulatory and legal problems and try to get ahead of them and get them removed," he said.

Submitted by: Greg Wilson



Even a broken clock tells time correctly twice a day

Hushed-Up Disaster Dept.

Hushed-Up Disaster Dept.: If you've been paying attention to online forums, you've discovered a **scandal** that few companies are talking about. The only major media coverage has been in the *Toronto Star*. And it's a weird story.

Apparently because of **industrial espionage**—the facts are murky—a **defective formulation** for capacitor electrolyte, possibly stolen from a Japanese capacitor maker, was used over the past year or two to manufacture **millions** of cheap capacitors, mostly by Taiwan-based component makers. The flawed electrolyte forms hydrogen, then the capacitors leak, bulge, or pop like firecrackers. These caps are now blowing up motherboards left and right.

Only Abit Computer Corp. and IBM have had the guts to admit the problem. No

computer vendor is immune to this situation as far as I can tell, but most are playing dumb, **threatening to sue** if their names are mentioned or hiding behind NDAs. They are hoping the problem will blow over.

Tech-repair firms like to tell people that this problem is caused by power surges—**blaming the victim**. Do a Google search on bad capacitor electrolyte or a similar combination of terms to see what is going on. It seems these bad caps are also found in some camcorders, VCRs, and other electronic gear. When they fail, the entire board fails. There is evidence that the first batch of bad capacitors appeared in 2001, and one repair person in Utah says **he's replaced 40,000** bad caps already.

By [John C. Dvorak](#) For further input on this story go to: <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,4149,933571,00.asp>

Submitted by: Y. Bulger

Well known reaction to computer crashes



Remember, computers make, fast, very accurate mistakes ...

IBM releases desktop-priced ThinkPad's -

Notebook priced under \$1,000 Priced at under \$1,000, a new version of the ThinkPad notebook computer is targeted at users who are interested in switching from desktop PCs to laptop computers, but don't have much need for mobility, according to IBM Corp.

Screen sizes up to 15 inches and a wedge-shaped design with a larger, more ergonomic keyboard are just two of the features that are supposed to ease the transition to the notebook platform for IBM customers used to working on desktop machines, according to Chris Mantin, worldwide segment marketing manager for ThinkPad at IBM.

Also like desktop machines, the new G40s use Intel Pentium or Celeron brand desktop processors and come outfitted with four USB (Universal Serial Bus) ports for connecting peripheral devices.

Many competing notebooks in the so-called "desktop replacement" market have only one or two USB ports, according to Mantin.

Unlike Dell, IBM also decided to stick with a so-called "three spindle" design that includes a floppy disk drive in addition to a hard disk and optical (CD/DVD) drive, Mantin said.

He cited the continued use of the 1.44 MB floppy disk among the G40's target customers in small and medium-sized businesses, education and government as the

reason behind the decision to include the extra drive.

The key for IBM is to provide a smooth transition from the desktop to the notebook platform with a "desktop replacement" that doesn't deprive customers of functionality they are used to in the name of portability, according to Mantin.

Such customers either prefer larger screens and keyboards and need only "occasional mobility," or are not ready to make the radical switch from desktops to "ultralight" notebooks, finding comfort in the similar features and specifications between desktop computers and desktop replacement notebooks.

Accordingly, the G40 is heavier than other ThinkPad models, weighing in at between seven and 7.9 pounds and has a more limited battery life than other notebooks. Lower-end models come with a six-cell Lithium Ion battery that allows the G40 to run for approximately two hours. Higher-end models come with a 12-cell battery that provides up to three and a half hours of life.

Despite the focus on creating a desktop-like notebook, IBM is offering a number of features aimed at portable users, including dual-band 802.11a and 802.11b wireless support with selected G40 models. In addition to an antenna built in to the G40's display and a mini PCI (Peripheral Component Interconnect) wireless card integrated onto the motherboard, wireless-enabled G40 models are preloaded with

(Continued on page 5)



Better to debate a question without settling it, than settling a question without debating it!

(Continued from page 4)

the IBM Access Connections Version 2.6

software, which enables mobile users to detect and switch between available wireless connections based on their priority and speed, according to Martin.

The G40s are available immediately from IBM and start at \$949 for a model with an

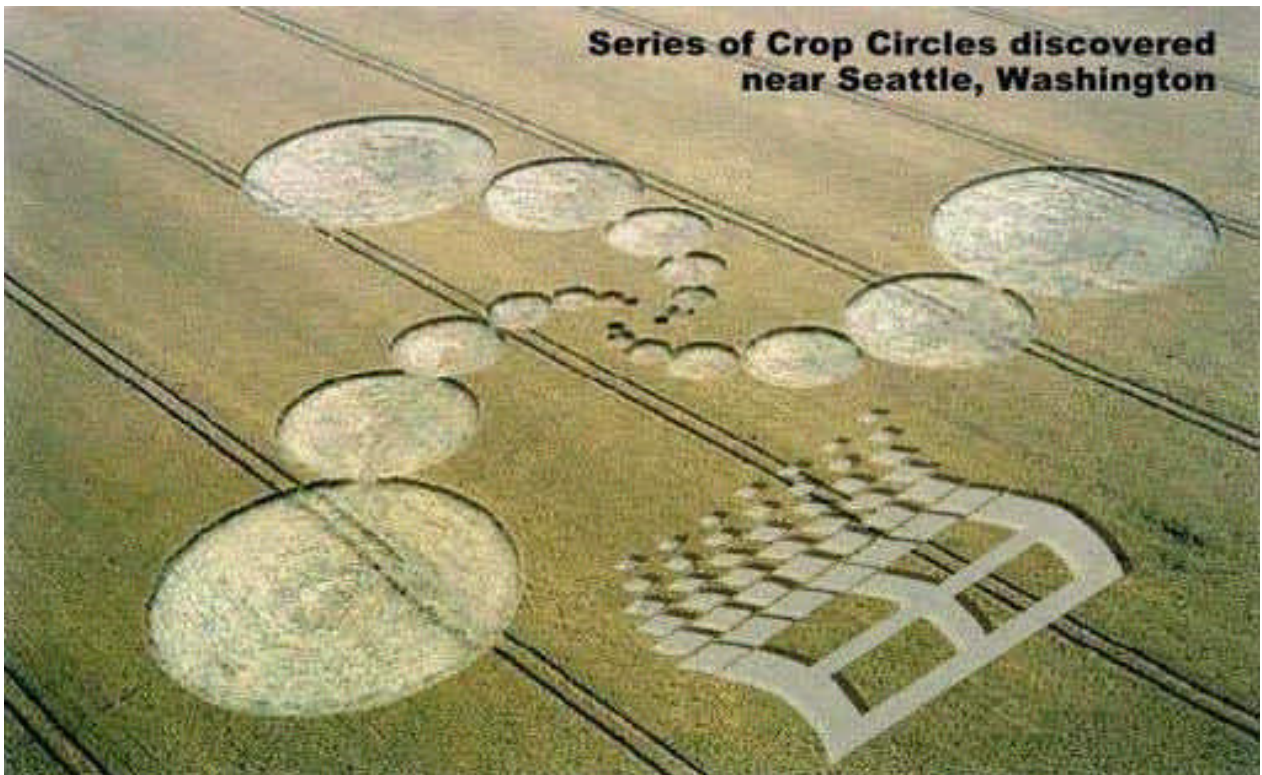
By Paul Roberts - April 22, 2003

To read more about the IBM ThinkPad R Series



go to:

<http://www.pc.ibm.com/us/thinkpad/gseries/index.html>



Humor supplied by:<http://www.kissmyfloppy.com/>



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Mel*



A clear conscience is usually a sign of a bad memory!

\$\$\$The Computer Age and it's Amazing Success Stories\$\$\$

The Google Story

Google began as a research project at Stanford University in spring 1995. There, two computer science PhD candidates, Sergey Brin and Larry Page, worked together to develop the search technology that would become the foundation of Google Inc.

"Larry was looking at the link structure of the Web, a sort of mathematical problem about which pages pointed to which other pages," Brin recalls. "I was looking at the concept of data mining -- how useful information could be extracted from large quantities of information."

After developing the desired technology, Page and Brin considered selling it to other search sites and emerging portals. After initial discussions with these companies, they decided to start their own search engine.

They called it Google, derived from the word googol, which is the name for a large number that can be represented as 1 followed by 100 zeros.

"We wanted Google to reflect our mission to search through the immense amount of information available on the Web," shares Larry, "and we wanted it to be fun."

The growth of Google

Early investors also quickly saw the promise of this new search technology. After

just 30 minutes of discussion and a brief demo, Andy Bechtolsheim, co-founder of Sun Microsystems and current vice president at Cisco Systems, wrote a check on the spot for \$100,000.

When Google reached one million dollars in funding, Brin and Page put their doctoral degrees on hold. They knew they were onto something big.

Google comes to life

By June 1999, Google had gained momentum as a viable startup, capturing headlines and attention in an already crowded industry. Venture capitalists Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers and Sequoia Capital invested an additional \$25 million.

Page and Brin formed Google Inc. in September 1998. A year later, the company took the search engine out of beta and officially launched Google in September 1999.

Today the search engine site delivers more than 70 million searches a day, with more than half originating at www.google.com. (Other searches use the Google engine but originate at a partner site.) Google is available in 26 languages and more than half of Google's traffic comes from outside the United States.

Google currently has about 200 employ-

(Continued on page 9)



If at first you do succeed, try not to look astonished



Club Contact List

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"DAD COMPRESSED MY FILES! NOW, INSTEAD OF A TERM PAPER ABOUT A TALL MAN NAMED ALFONSO, IT'S A PARAGRAPH ABOUT A SHORT GUY NAMED AL!"



If at first you don't succeed, destroy all the evidence that you tried



Walking the Trapeze With “The Net”

Memories are made of this A look back into computer history

<http://www.old-computers.com/museum/default.asp>

<http://www.piercefuller.com/collect/>

<http://rune.tapper.com/museum/>

These sites definitely make you think about how far technology has come in such a short time, if nothing else the pictures of the old equipment is good for a giggle.



Luxor ABC 80 (1978)



IMC Traveler

Submitted by: Y. Bulger

(Continued from page 7)

ees with more than 40 PhDs on staff processing thousands of user queries a minute.

Most search engines return results based on how often keywords appear in a website. Google is different.

Google uses what it calls PageRank technology to quickly scan its index and produce highly relevant results to a search query, often in less than half a second.

PageRank relies on the democratic nature

of the Web by using its vast link structure as an indicator of an individual page's value. Google interprets a link from Page A to Page B as a vote.

The power of PageRank

Google looks at more than the sheer volume of votes, or links a page receives, it also analyzes the page that casts the vote. Votes cast by pages that are themselves important weigh more heavily and help to make other pages important.

(Continued on page 10)



It's not hard to meet expensesthey're everywhere



What's coming up in May 2003

The presenter for the May 14th meeting will be Ev Salo from Island Technology Group, she will be presenting MICROSOFT WORD.

Please check the Web site for details of the meeting for
Tuesday 20th May

(Continued from page 9)

Important, high-quality sites receive a higher PageRank, which Google remembers each time it conducts a search.

Google further combines PageRank with sophisticated text-matching techniques to find pages that are both important and relevant to a search.

Google goes far beyond the number of times a term appears on a page and examines all aspects of the page's content (and the content of the pages linking to

it) to determine if it's a good match for a query.

"Google uses a fully automated, objective mathematical equation that says a webpage is important if a number of pages point to it and if pages that are important point to it," says Google CEO and co-founder Larry Page. "Each search result involves a series of calculations that normally occur in under half a second. Google does not use any human intervention to judge the value of a page's importance."

Submitted by: Y. Bulger



Wasting time is an important part of life

NEWS

Review of April 2003 Meetings

Neil Jacobson and Jeff Saunders from Staples, Brooks Landing store, gave a very thorough presentation on 'All in One' printers at our meeting on **April 9th**.

The pros and cons of each of the four units they brought with them, combined printer, fax, scanner and copier, was explained in detail, and we discovered that one does not need a computer to download and print from a digital camera, using the HP version of the All in One, I do believe that technology is getting away from me.

Our thanks again to Neil and Jeff and to Staples, of Brooks Landing.

With regard to our second meeting, held

on **April 15th**. We were due to have Microsoft Word explained in detail, however Ev Salo from Island Technologies was, regrettably, unable to attend.

Our own Wes Jackson stepped up to the plate and demonstrated and discussed the little Gems that he has found for the latest Club CD. A great many of which are now being used on my computer.

For those of you who are on a 'high speed' connection you may be prepared to take the time to hunt and download on your own, however for those without the time or inclination to do that or for those of us that are still on a dial up, the Club CD is a valuable little tool I for one would not be without.

Thanks once more Wes, both for the CD and for stepping in once again on short notice.

Submitted by: Gordon Hussey



Don't ever take a fence down until you know why it was put up.