

It's a Really
Big Company

Special
points of
interest:

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Security that's not secure

I ran across a report in Tweak-ers.net about a "secure" USB drive that isn't very secure. Losing a thumb drive with 2GB or more of personal or business data on it can be a huge problem. Those devices are small and easy to lose, so it's no surprise that a lot of them have been lost. Sipal International released a thumb drive called Secustick, claiming that it would "self-destruct" if the user entered an incorrect password more than a set number of times. The stick was commissioned by the French government (I'm thinking *Magi-not Line* here) and a 1GB thumb drive (\$175, compared to standard 1GB thumb drives at \$10 or so) turned out not to be very secure. Read the entire report at <http://tweakers.net/reviews/683/>.

The Tweak-ers site mentions an application called TrueCrypt, so

I decided to take a look at it. TrueCrypt can encrypt the data in a file, directory, or an entire device (hard drive or thumb drive, for example) and it can



These are purty orange flowers that my orange cat would appreciate.

encrypt it in such a way that even if you are captured and forced to give someone the password, the data will be encrypted.

Two points before I go any further: If you download TrueCrypt, read the instructions; and yes, this is exactly the kind of tool a terrorist would love to use.

I caution you to read the instructions because if you just run the program and follow the on-screen instructions, you might choose to encrypt an existing file, folder, partition, drive, or USB device. If you do that, any data that was on the device will be erased. In other words, TrueCrypt does not encrypt files in place. You create an encrypted device or directory and then you put files there. Files placed in the special directory are encrypted.

Apple's security: Overrated?

Remember when everyone seemed to think Apple's computers were secure? I said that there weren't as many exploits against Apple's OS X because it is inherently more secure than Windows because OS X is based on Unix, which had security built in from the

beginning, and Windows is based on DOS, which had security added on. That's the part of my comment that Apple users like to hear. What they didn't like was the part when I continued to say that another reason for the lack of exploits was a smaller user

base. And, I said, any operating system has some vulnerabilities. OS X is still more secure than Windows, but the severity and the number of "issues" is increasing.



Always stir coffee clockwise. See *A Clockwork Orange* for details.

This is a stirring story

Vista wins? Not exactly.

This week, Softpedia said “while Mac OS X users are busy bees updating and patching their operating system, Windows Vista users can kick back, even if it is just for this month. This is an argument that should put a sock in a lot of mouths that applaud the security of Mac OS X over Windows. But that won’t happen. Not even with this month’s Apple patches. There is simply too much

arrogance in Mac users, a behavior condoned and shared by Apple as a company.”

That’s exactly the kind of absurd Windows vs Mac nonsense that provides precious little light and a fair amount of heat.

Windows, the Mac OS, Unix, Linux, DOS, and every other operating system ever created are works of human programmers. Human programmers make

mistakes in coding. They overlook things. They underestimate thieves. They share with each other the inability to see around corners. So every operating system ever written—and probably every operating system that ever will be written—is flawed. And that’s true whether it’s written in Redmond, Washington; Cupertino, California; or Bangalore, India.

“Any qualified manufactured base group will be welcome.”

Wal-Mart and HD-DVD players

For the past week or two, there have been rumors that Wal-Mart will have cheap HD DVD players in time for Christmas this year. If Wal-Mart goes for HD DVD, the rumor suggested, then Blu-ray is doomed. Maybe. If Wal-Mart does that, but the company says that’s not happening.

Will the Fuh Yuan company in Taiwan work with TDK to produce under-\$300 HD DVD players for Wal-Mart? Nope, says a company spokesman. Wal-Mart says the reports were totally inaccurate. Or were they? Some governments and some businesses say one thing and then do exactly the opposite. If Wal-Mart is planning a big HD DVD

splash for the holidays, it would be in the company’s best interests not to let competitors know.

Fuh Yuan is playing along. The company posted a notice on its website stating that its previous statement that Wal-Mart had 2,000,000 HD DVDs on order was inoperative.

Microsoft Windows: \$3?

No, this isn’t one of those idiotic spams claiming “OEM software”. It’s more like what some drug companies do in providing drugs that are hundreds of dollars per dose in developed countries

for pennies in the developing world. Microsoft will offer a limited versions of Windows, Office, and other applications to those in developing countries.

Bill Gates announced the program this week in Beijing and this clearly illustrates just how frightened

Microsoft is of the open source community. Some governments are recommending the open-source Linux, a free operating system, and applications such as OpenOffice, which is also free.

This is a good example of how to show depth



Now and forever?



Twenty years ago or more, Apple started putting its computers in classrooms and Microsoft now sees the value of attracting young users. Some of the children who are introduced to Windows will become adults

Here we have kids walking on the beach.

who are responsible for buying businesses machines. Get them young and you can keep them for life.

Maybe. When my younger daughter started classes at the Columbus College of Art and Design, I told her that she had to have a Mac because commercial artists use Macs. She'd used Apple computers at school and didn't like them because we had PCs at

home. She didn't want a Mac, but accepted one grudgingly when I gave her no choice. Within a few months, she was making fun of Windows PCs even as her Mac crashed several times a day.

I suppose that I should have more text here, but I don't. I'll just type some meaningless blather and hope that nobody notices that it's just filler.

Did you notice that what I just added is nonsense?

"To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here."

Too many boxes!

There's a Vista in my future.

I'm sitting here looking at a box that contains Windows Vista. In mid February I wrote: I've received a lot of questions about Vista. "Should I upgrade now or later?" is the primary question. In reviewing the question, I suggest leaving out the "now or later" part—at least for the immediate future. The primary

question is whether you should upgrade. For me, the current answer is no, but that's subject to change.

The primary case against upgrading turns on several points: The system I have works just fine the way it is; Vista, although probably compatible with all of my hardware, isn't compatible with some of my

software; no matter how well any system has been tested, there will always be problems that don't become apparent until the product is in the hands of consumers; and right now I just don't have time.

Most designers would say that there are too many boxes on this page.

See the pretty yellow flower over there!

This message was not set wirelessly from my Blackberry.

Research in Motion (RIM), the Blackberry guys, at first didn't admit that there was a problem. Maybe they were thinking "If we don't mention it, nobody will notice." Given the large number of Blackberry users, that's unlikely. Public relations professionals are supposed to com-

municate with their various publics when things go wrong and that didn't happen in a timely manner with RIM.

Finally, after more than 2 days, RIM came forward with an explanation: The problem was an insufficiently tested software upgrade. Five million Blackberry users found themselves without service starting about 8

pm Tuesday and continued until Thursday night.

The upgrade was expected to improve service, not to wreck it. Instead, the upgrade "triggered a compounding series of interaction errors."



This is a pretty yellow flower. Some cats would eat this flower, but why?



Organization

It's a Really Big Company

Primary Business Address

Your Address Line 2

Your Address Line 3

Your Address Line 4

Phone: 555-555-5555

Fax: 555-555-5555

E-mail: someone@example.com

Your business tag line here.

This would be a good place to insert a short paragraph about your organization. It might include the purpose of the organization, its mission, founding date, and a brief history. You could also include a brief list of the types of products, services, or programs your organization offers, the geographic area covered (for example, western U.S. or European markets), and a profile of the types of customers or members served.

It would also be useful to include a contact name for readers who want more information about the organization.



AMD: Losses higher than expected

I've been a fan of AMD for a long time. Always the underdog, AMD was considered the "value leader" in CPUs for years, regularly providing CPUs almost as fast as Intel's, but at a lower price. AMD beat Intel briefly in the speed wars and still makes worthy products, but price cuts by Intel have forced AMD to cut prices and have created large losses.

Advanced Micro Devices continues to struggle, but there are signs that the price war is abating. Consumers might view that as bad news, but it's good for Intel to have at least one viable competitor.

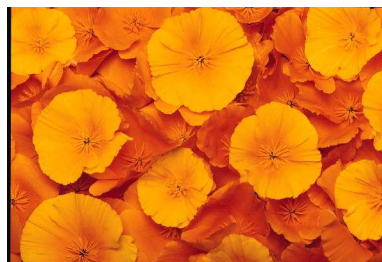
AMD reported this week that it lost \$611 million in the first three months of the year, which compares with a profit of \$185 million

a year ago. Sales amounted to \$1.23 billion, which is about 7% lower than last year.

Robert Rivet, AMD's chief financial officer, on a conference call with analysts said that the first quarter of 2007 was a terrible start to the year, but he said that AMD is "confident we have a plan

to put us back on the right track."

Looking at the second quarter, AMD is optimistic. Sales are predicted to be flat, but the company expects market-share gains at Intel's expense. AMD wouldn't explain the reason for their optimism, but AMD plans to cut 500 jobs, about 3% of its workforce, by the end of the year through attrition and performance evaluations.



Here are those orange flowers again. I'm not sure what my orange cat would think.