

## Computer Power User

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### Leaders Of The Pack

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# What's Happening

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In the spirit of April Fools' Day, we've tossed in three stories that just aren't true. See if you can spot the ones we made up.

### ■ In Hardware . . .

#### Intel Gets Cool



Last month we reported that VIA's new C3, a cool-running x86 processor built on a 0.13-micron core, was in production. Now Intel has announced seven new M family mobile processors that are also low power-consumers built on a 0.13-micron core. Processors include two Low Voltage Mobile Pentium III Processor-M versions and an Ultra Low Voltage Mobile Pentium III Processor-M; all three feature a 512KB L2 cache and on average, consume less than one watt of power each.

Clock speeds are 850MHz and 866MHz for the vanilla Low Voltage chips (each costs \$316) and 750MHz for the Ultra Low version (\$209).

The new chip list also includes four Celeron processors, all of which have a 256KB L2 cache. The three standard Mobile Celeron processors have clock speeds up to 1.06GHz, 1.13GHz, and 1.2GHz; cost \$107, \$134, and \$170, respectively; and operate at 1.45 volts. The fourth, the Ultra Low Voltage Mobile Celeron processor, has clock speeds up to 650MHz, costs \$144, and operates on 1.1 volts. The list of OEMs building systems around the new processors isn't surprising; it includes Compaq, Dell, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, NEC, and Toshiba.

#### Meet The Jetsons



Well, sort of. Flying cars still occupy the science fiction realm a la "Blade Runner," but personal flying machines aren't too far off. Millennium Jet ([www.solotrek.com](http://www.solotrek.com)), based in Sunnyvale, Calif., recently announced the success of its SoloTrek XfV. The SoloTrek uses ducted fans instead of propellers; one test flight proved the strap-on, fan-like device could, in its current incarnation, lift a man and keep him airborne for as long as 19 seconds. Granted, the man was tethered 3 feet above the ground, but still.

The SoloTrek uses a two-cycle piston engine and is designed to produce minimal vibration and noise. The first for-sale SoloTrek will travel at speeds as fast as 80mph and will have a range of approximately 130 miles. Its maximum altitude isn't certain, but the device is intended

to hover at or below 100 feet above ground. According to Millennium Jet, the device should hit the market sometime in 2002 and will bear a price tag "similar to that of a very high-end sports car." >



### **Vivastar Gets Competitive**

Vivastar, an up-and-coming Swiss DVD drive manufacturer, recently announced a partnership with RealNetworks that threatens to impinge on the seemingly omnipotent new Moxi MC's (Media Center) digital entertainment turf. The partnership involves the impending release of Vivastar's DVD EveryWare, a digital device that, like the Moxi MC, provides Internet access via cable modem or DSL, plays CDs and DVDs, and can store hours of audio and video.

Although the DVD EveryWare doesn't match the Moxi MC's maximum storage capabilities, it has a unique standout attribute: Using DVD EveryWare software loaded on a supported notebook or handheld device, users can reportedly watch streaming video (and of course listen to audio) originating from the DVD EveryWare box back home from virtually anywhere. Vivastar spokesperson Josef Hans says the DVD EveryWare is on track for a June 24 release in Europe; a U.S. release should follow shortly thereafter.

### **Slice & Dice: The Next Wave Of Entertainment Devices**

Not too long ago Hewlett-Packard debuted its pricey (\$999) de100c Digital Entertainment Center, a Linux-based multifunction device that lets you store 685 hours worth of music on a 40GB hard drive. We could smell a trend coming. What makes the de100c so fantastic compared to typical jukeboxes is that it provides Internet connectivity: You can listen to Internet radio, buy music off the Internet, and even burn CDs with encoding rates as fast as 256Kbps.



***Hewlett-Packard's  
de100c Digital  
Entertainment Center***

Like the de100c, Moxi Digital's new Moxi MC (Media Center) capitalizes on two growing trends: that of essentially stuffing a PC dedicated to entertainment in one or two set-top boxes and that of DVD's increasing popularity. According to the Consumer Electronics Association, U.S. sales of DVD players grew 49.5% in 2001 and are expected to grow 25% more in 2002.



***Moxi Digital's coveted  
Moxi MC***

The \$425 Moxi MC, however, ups the ante immensely with features that include every facet of digital entertainment: It's a digital cable and satellite receiver; a CD/DVD player; a digital jukebox capable of storing about 500 CDs worth of music (and if that's not enough, you can add storage via a FireWire port); a 60-hour video recorder (a la TiVo); and an Internet gateway via cable/DSL modem. The device also lets you play video on as many as four televisions anywhere (within reason) in your house using a \$75 auxiliary receiver. We're over-stimulated just thinking about it.

### **ASU Equips Students With PDAs**

Arizona State University recently distributed

Compaq iPAQ pocket PCs to first-year graduate students in its MBA High Technology Program. Each iPAQ comes complete with Microsoft's Pocket software and includes syllabi for first-year coursework, an academic calendar, and faculty contact information. By giving PDAs to students, ASU intends to promote organization, academic interconnectedness, and a sense of well-being that only PDA ownership provides.



***First-year students in ASU's MBA High Technology Program receive Compaq's iPAQ 3670 to help stay connected.***

The High Technology Program integrates business and management classes with engineering and science, and program officials oversee a one-schedule-fits-all course load. Productivity might improve, with Pocket versions of Word, Excel, and PowerPoint always at each student's fingertips. But there's bound to be a party or two where the iPAQ's streaming video, audio, and wireless Internet access features aren't exactly used for intended purposes.

ASU first tried the PDA program last fall, when 55 Compaq iPAQ 3670s were provided to students and faculty free of charge, according to Professor Brian Boyd, faculty director of the MBA High Technology program. Students have since reported increased productivity and having approximately 45 minutes of extra time each week. PDA distribution to first-year students is slated to continue indefinitely.

#### ■ In Software . . .

#### **New Software Enables Power Napping, No Blankie Required**

Sleepy Handspring Visor users can now purchase JETLOG's ([www.jetlog24x7.com](http://www.jetlog24x7.com)) new 24x7 PowerNapping Springboard module for \$99. Based on NASA's sleep-pattern research for pilots and astronauts, JETLOG touts the module as a remedy for sleep-deprived business people and others (it seems to us that truckers would be excellent candidates, as well) who stand to benefit from a refreshing power nap.



The module includes a touch-sensitive device and software that work together to detect when a user falls into deep sleep or an REM state based on muscle tension. When tension occurs, the software initiates what **JETLOG** calls "extra loud internal speaker sounds" to prevent sleep inertia, or "the grogginess, disorientation, sleepiness, headaches, and bad mood that accompany waking out of" deep sleep. The module includes a headset so users can drown out external noise and focus the apparently intense beeps directly at their ears.

The PowerNapping module works on Visor, Visor Deluxe, Visor Edge, Visor Neo, Visor Platinum, and Visor Pro handheld devices. The module includes a port for an external sensor (so you can actually attach the thing to yourself rather than clutch it in your hand), but due to testing obstacles with the electrode component, the external sensor is not yet available. However, according to JETLOG President and CEO Karim Daghbouche, a standalone module with a wider range of features will be available in Q2 of 2002.

#### **CD Anticopy Efforts Face New Hurdles**

Citing the rules set forth in the 1992 AHRA (Audio Home Recording Act), Democratic Rep. Rick Boucher of Virginia recently wrote a letter to the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) in which he raised concerns about industry trends. Rep. Boucher questioned the legality of including anticopy mechanisms on CDs because the AHRA provides that a music consumer should be able to make personal copies; it appears, then, that anticopy CDs violate consumers' fair-use rights.

"It is worth noting, however, that the AHRA is aimed primarily at dedicated audio recording devices like DAT machines, audio CD burners, minidisc, and technologies like that," says Fred von Lohmann, a staff attorney for the Electronic Frontier Foundation ([www.eff.org](http://www.eff.org)). "It does not have any direct relevance to PC-based technologies like the CD burners that most PCs ship with these days. It's a strange accident of copyright law that we treat these things differently."

Taking a different tack, Philips Electronics, one of the early pioneers in the CD industry, recently went so far as to argue that CDs containing anticopy software shouldn't be able to bear the standard Compact Disc logo. Philips argues that such CDs aren't really CDs at all because CDs are supposed to be playable under any usual circumstance. Instead, Philips reportedly wants to see copy-protected CDs imprinted with a label that identifies the CD as one including anticopy software. It's unclear what the practical effect of Philips' argument will be, but new labeling guidelines could be coming soon.

### Computers With Taste



Montreal-based Labroque Solutions recently announced a team-up with VIA Technologies to develop processors and software dedicated to the sense of taste. The result is a module, currently in its third phase of testing, that uses a proprietary algorithm and a number of different sensors to effectively determine the contents of various substances. The process is "similar to processes used to detect environmental pollutants, such as toxicity levels and alkalinity in water," says Brett Labroque, president and CEO of Labroque Solutions.

Rather than studying liquids for potentially hazardous contents, however, the Labroque module "reads" liquids and separates different parts in a manner similar to how the human tongue identifies different tastes. Early tests involved analyzing different red wines. Once the module identifies particular elements of taste, the software portion can be made to do whatever programmers want, according to Labroque. "The module has many exciting possibilities" in terms of applications, including the ability

to quickly analyze liquids poured into a blender and determine the ratio of each liquid.

Numerous manufacturers have already expressed interest. Realistic applications include drink analyzers that let bartenders know the exact proportions of alcohol and other liquids; a similar (and healthier) application would benefit makers of juice mixtures and health drinks. Labroque says niche industries should be able to purchase the module by Q4 2002.

### Software Shorts

Here are a couple interesting nuggets we ran across right before press time.

#### iPod For Windows?

Apple politely declined our request for information about its development of iPod software for Windows, but that's not surprising given the company's legendary shroud of secrecy regarding future releases. But by the time you read this, Mediafour's XPlay should be readily available. Formerly known as XPod (Apple nudged Mediafour to change the name because, ah, it's just a little too similar to iPod), XPlay lets you rip MP3 files from a PC running Win98SE/2000/Me/XP to an iPod via an IEEE 1394 (FireWire) connection. XPlay has been enjoying a successful preview, but a handful of questions remain about how much the software lets you do with an iPod; check out Mediafour's excellent XPlay FAQ section for details ([www.mediafour.com/products/xplay/faq.asp](http://www.mediafour.com/products/xplay/faq.asp)). According to a Mediafour representative, a firmware updater for Windows is ready for release and might be available by the time this issue prints.

#### USB 2.0 Driver For XP Now Available

Windows XP users who want to tap into the powerful 480Mbps bandwidth that USB 2.0 provides are in luck. WinXP was released last October without USB 2.0 support, but the final release version of Microsoft's USB 2.0 driver is now available as a Windows Update. The update, called Microsoft USB Driver Version 5.1.2600.0, is available to WinXP users through the WinXP Start menu. USB 2.0 support is also available to OEMs and system builders. Microsoft says it's also on track for providing Bluetooth support for WinXP by mid-2002.



***Spectators using Ericsson's Event System can access a player's vital stats and view a game from a number of different angles using a supported PDA such as the Compaq shown here.***

## ■ Internet . . .

### Be The Ball

Or we could say, "be the puck." It all depends on where Ericsson's new Event System will be used. Here's the deal: The Swedish OEM Ericsson recently tested new software that enables sports fans to experience the sights and sounds of a game via IP multicast. Ericsson's first tests used 12 Compaq iPAQs, with which journalists viewed a hockey game between Lulea and Vastra Frolunda at the Delfinen sports arena in Lulea, Sweden. The test also tapped the city's fiber-optic wireless network so residents at home could watch the game, select different camera angles, and click hyperlinks to statistical information.

While watching a game over the Internet is nothing new, the Event System adds a number of features to the mix. The system involves placing Web cams

and microphones on players' helmets, sensors on the players themselves, and additional cameras and microphones throughout the arena. As a result, users can simultaneously access multiple views of the same game; sounds directly from game level; and players' heart rates, breathing rates, speed of movement, and position. You can also chat with other users while you experience the event. Ericsson says the Event System's intended uses include almost any arena event, including concerts and trade shows.

The Arena program at the Makitalo Research Center ([www.cdt.luth.se/projects/arena](http://www.cdt.luth.se/projects/arena)), where the Event System is currently under development, is a joint venture between the Lulea University of Technology, Ericsson, and Telia. The system is available for trial installations through Ericsson. Event System supports Linux Red Hat 7.1 and Windows 2000 Server, MPEG-4 streaming video to Windows Media Player, and WLAN-equipped Pocket PCs running Windows CE 3.0. The current Event System version handles as many as 500 simultaneous users and should be more widely available by Q4 2002.

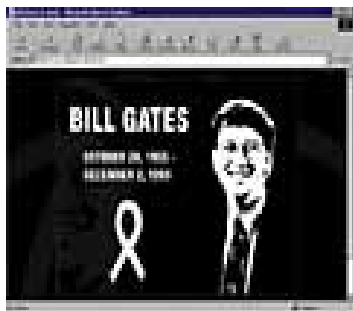
### Internet Bits

*Sometimes all the news simply doesn't fit, but here are a handful of items we squeezed in just for you.*

#### Microsoft Hacked By Al-Qaeda?

According to a report in the New Delhi, India-based Hindustan Times, Mumbai, Bombay, police arrested Mohammad Afroze Abdul Razzak, 25, for connection to terrorist attacks in India, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Among his confessions, Afroze claimed to have infiltrated the Redmond, Wash., castle walls and worked as a Microsoft programmer, where he attempted to corrupt the burgeoning WinXP by planting "Trojans, trapdoors, and bugs" in the OS. A psychiatric examination reportedly proved Afroze mentally competent. The story has been corroborated by numerous media sources, but our attempts to reach the Mumbai Cyber Crime Investigation Cell were unsuccessful. Microsoft is on record as calling the claims "unsubstantiated."

## Who Killed Bill Gates?



Self-appointed Bill Gates "curator" Jack Perdue manages a site ([www.billgatesisdead.com](http://www.billgatesisdead.com)) dedicated to the life and legacy of Bill Gates and, more to the point, the mystery surrounding his mythical death on Dec. 2, 1999. According to the site, Gates was slain by a sniper in MacArthur Park. The site has generated a lot of controversy, which works out nicely for film director Brian Flemming and the crew behind "The Blair Witch

Project," who recently completed a faux documentary, "Nothing So Strange," about Gates' mythic assassination.

### Yahoo! Premium Edition

Yahoo! recently linked up with enterprise management powerhouse divine to create Premium Document Search ([premium.search.yahoo.com](http://premium.search.yahoo.com)), an online document library for the masses. The site is elegantly stripped down to a single field; type what you're looking for and click Search. The site provides access to more than 70 million full-text documents from more than 7,100 sources and displays a document summary for every hit. If you want to go further, you must pay \$1 to \$4 to access each article or pay \$4.95 a month. But click Qualifying Document before subscribing; tons of sources are listed, but the subscription price might not cover the ones you're interested in. After a search, you can click the Web Sites or Web Pages links for relevant links; you're then back in more familiar Yahoo! territory, although Google (rather than Yahoo!) powers the search engine for these portions of the site.

### BIOS Upgrades Available Online

Before you send another motherboard to the landfill, consider upgrading your BIOS and giving your PC a new outlook on life. [Click here to see the upgrade list.](#)

**If you guessed that we made up the "Vivistar Gets Competitive," "Computers With Taste," and "Watching The Chips Go By" pieces, you guessed right.**

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