Star Tech

World Wide Web

The World Wide Web ("WWW" or simply the "Web") is a system of interlinked, hypertext documents that runs over the Internet. With a Web browser, a user views Web pages that may contain text, images, and other multimedia and navigates between them using hyperlinks. The Web was created around 1990 by the Englishman Tim Berners-Lee working at CERN in Geneva, Switzerland. As its inventor, Berners-Lee conceived the Web to be the Semantic Web where all its contents should be descriptively marked-up.

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TECHLOOKBACK

Sites that became names in 2006

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THE year 2006 re-energised the online activities as several revolutionary changes took place. Due to these changes today internet not only considered as a giant network of communication but as a platform where people exhibit their creativity and get almost everything to maintain a smart life.

Needless to say websites with distinctive features are playing the pioneering role for the recent advancement of internet. In this article, I highlighted four immensely popular websites that give the birth of a new craze among the net loving people. Some of them started off early, but their impact was like a big bang for the internet last year.

YouTube
(www.youtube.com)

Very popular website in recent time and its user-base is increasing day by day. YouTube is an exciting free video sharing website, which lets users upload, view and share video clips.

YouTube's video playback technology is based on Macromedia's Flash Player 7 and uses the Sorenson Spark H.263 video codec. This technology allows YouTube to display videos with quality comparable to more established video playback technologies (such as Windows Media Player, Real Player or Apple's Quicktime Player) that generally require the user to download and install a web browser plugin in order to watch video. The use of Flash video was most likely a key component of YouTube's success, allowing viewers to watch video instantly without installing software or dealing with a common problem experienced with other web video technologies-- incompatible or varying versions of video players.

According to a survey, 100 million clips are viewed daily on YouTube, with an additional 65,000 new videos uploaded per 24 hours. The site has almost 20 million visitors each month. YouTube's pre-eminence in the online market is staggering. According to the website Hitswise.com, YouTube com-

mands up to 64 percent of the UK online video market.

Due to the unprecedented success of YouTube, Google showed its intention to purchase YouTube. Google acquired YouTube for US $ 1.65 billion in stock and it is so far Google's biggest purchase. YouTube faced setback regarding content gathering. Due to the copyright law NBC and CBS asked YouTube to remove some of their contents. But considering the sky rocked popularity of YouTube NBC and CBS withdraw their embargo. After NBC and CBS, Universal Music Group and Sony BMG Music

Entertainment also agreed to provide content to YouTube.

User friendly interface of YouTube enables users to submit videos in several common-file formats (such as .mpeg and .avi). YouTube automatically converts them to the H.263 variant of Flash video and makes them available for online viewing. YouTube itself does not make it easy to download and save videos for offline viewing or editing but several third-party applications, browser extensions and web sites exists for that purpose.

Recently YouTube announced that due to the agreement with high-profile content creators, they were now required to use anti-

piracy software. The software uses an audio-signature technology that can spot a low quality copy of a licensed music video or other content. YouTube would have to substitute an approved version of the clip or take the material down automatically. Analysts predict that this might bring adverse impact on user satisfaction.

Second Life
(www.secondlife.com)

Mysterious name, but not actually means something after the death. Second Life is an online virtual world provided by Linden Lab, which came in limelight in late

2006. Through a client program, subscription-based users interact with other users through avatars, providing an advanced social network service.

Much likes a game but it doest not have points, scores, winners or losers, levels, an end-strategy or most of the other characteristics of games. Users, who referred as "Residents" can do everything like natural life such as interact with other users or groups, buy items, virtual property and services from one another.

The number of registered accounts in Second Life reached one million on October 18, 2006 and doubled to two million, eight weeks later on December 14, 2006.

However, this number includes accounts that are no longer used, and multiple accounts created by the same real person.

Second Life has its own economy and a currency denoted as Linden Dollars. Residents create new goods and services, and buy and sell them in the Second Life virtual world. There are also currency exchanges where residents can exchange US dollars or other real world currencies for Linden dollars.

Linden Lab provides user clients for Windows, OSX and some distributions of Linux. Support for the Linux client is open source.

Client upgrades are usually mandatory; the old client will not work with the new version of the server software.

You can easily associate with Second Life activities by creating an account. A free account has most of the rights and obligations of a paid account, lacking primarily the right to own land. Many activities in Second Life are free, but others cost money, payable in Linden dollars. A premium membership also includes a weekly stipend, somewhat offsetting the membership payment.

My Space
(www.myspace.com)

You can utilise May Space to create your own social network.

Fifty-four million people have profiles on My Space as of February 2006, and 180,000 more register to use the site everyday. This site has more traffic than Google within three years of its 2003 launch. The underlying reason of My Space's success is its music connection. New bands use this site to promote their music. Prominent artists like Madonna, The Black Eyed Peas, Audioslave and Billy Corgan use this site to communicate with fans and get feedback on tracks. In addition, people looking to publish their poetry online or advertise and accept orders for their latest book through their profile page. To join My Space you need to register and create a basic profile. You also need to provide few details such as name, e-mail address, password, country, postal code, gender and birth date. During the initial sign-up, you also prompted to upload a photo and invite friends to join.

Google Earth
(www.googleearth.com)

Amazing website that provides you a thrilling experience. Presently Google Earth is available as a desktop application and you can download it form earth.google.com. Every time you open Google Earth, it automatically connects to Google's servers giving you access to terabytes of geographical, political and social data.

Google Earth formerly known as Earth Viewer developed by Keyhole, Inc., a company acquired by Google in 2004. The photographic maps available on Google Earth come primarily from two sources: satellites and aircraft. Google gets this imagery and other digital mapping information from sources such as TeleAtlas and EarthSat. Google Earth does not provide real time images. The information is no more than three years old and is continually updated as new data become available.

Google Earth developed 3-D buildings for major U.S. cities. Google Earth also included the searching capability of Google to provide more information about a particular location.

Reference: www.wikipedia.org

TECHNEWS

Apple unveils new iPhone

AFP, San Francisco

APPLE Computer announced its entry into the mobile phone market, proudly unveiling its "iPhone" that the company hopes will emulate the revolutionary success of the iPod.

Apple chief executive Steve Jobs introduced the sleek new device -- which also offers Internet access, a music player and a digital camera -- at the Macworld Conference and Expo in San Francisco, showcasing Apple technology.

"Every once in a while a revolutionary product comes along that changes everything," Jobs said.

"It's like having the internet in your pocket," the Apple CEO said. "It's the ultimate digital device. It's like having your life in your pocket."

Apple's shares surged 4.20 dollars, or 4.9 percent, to 89.67 dollars in the immediate wake of the company's announcement.

The iPhone will be ultra-slim -- less than half-an-inch (1.3 centimeters) thick -- boasting a phone, Internet capability and an MP3 player as well as featuring a two megapixel digital camera, Jobs said.

Two versions of the iPhone will be released, a four gigabyte version priced at 499 dollars and an eight gigabyte version priced at 599 dollars. The devices will be shipped to US retail stores in June, Jobs said.

Apple expects to make it available in Asia by 2008.

"This is a leapfrog product with a revolutionary new interface with software five years ahead of any other phone and desktop class applications, not those crippled applications you find on those other pho n e s," Jobs said.

"Most advanced phones are called smart phones," said Jobs. "But they are actually not so smart, and really not so easy to use.

"When you get a chance to get your hands on it, I think you'll agree, we've reinvented the phone," he said.

Analysts had been expecting Jobs to unveil the nifty new device at the conference, a move that aims to capitalize on the company's wildly popular iPod digital music player.

Jobs said he was confident the three-device-in-one iPhone will become the next iconic, must-have gadget, following on from the iPod phenomenon, despite competition.

"We always have stiff competition," Jobs said. "That's just the nature of the business."

Some representatives of cellphone makers attending an electronics show in Las Vegas, Nevada, were unimpressed.

"We launched the first of these devices in 2002," Nokia Comunications Multimedia Director Kari Tuutti told AFP at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, adding that 40 million devices with internet, music and a camera were sold last year.

"This is the fastest growing segment -- 250 millions units are expected to be sold in 2008," he said. "There is plenty of room for many players in this growing market."

Apple has crushed competitors in the music player market

since the release of the iPod. To date, Apple has sold two billion songs on iTunes, its online music service. "That's five million songs a day, making Apple the fourth largest music vendor," Jobs said.

The new device will also boast desktop class applications, Jobs said.

To demonstrate, he accessed Google maps satellite imaging and within seconds zoomed in on the Washington Monument, then the Eiffel Tower, and finally checked Apple's rapidly rising stock.

He also phoned a local coffee bar and jokingly ordered 4,000 lattes for his assembled guests.

Jobs also unveiled a separate device that will allow users to transfer video from their computers to televisions.

The set-top unit known as Apple TV enables viewers to stream digitally downloaded video from a desktop or laptop computer to a television, complementing Apple's online film service which is available through its iTunes store.
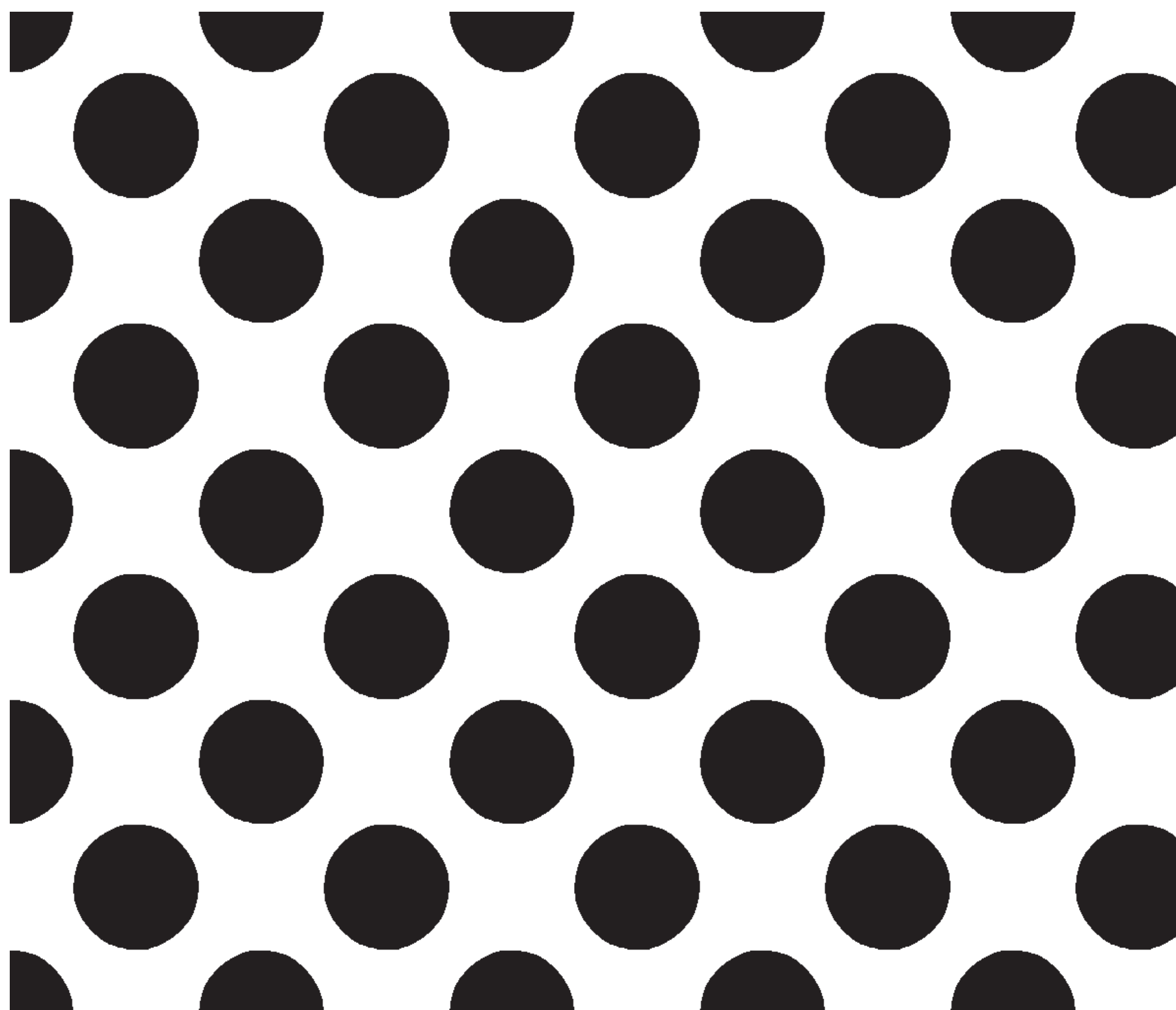
Apple TV comes equipped with a 40-gigabyte hard drive capable of storing up to 50 hours of video programming. It will be able to store videos, photos and music sent from computers within wireless range.

The video box will be available in February and be priced at 299 dollars.

TECHNEWS

Nothing but truth with internet lie detector

AFP, Israel

HAVE you ever wondered if someone you are chatting to is telling the truth? New lie detector software from high-tech powerhouse Israel says it can show you -- across the internet.

"We tested it with the (former US president Bill) Clinton speech about his relationship with his intern Monica Lewinsky," said Zvi Marom, head of the company behind the product.

"When he says 'I have never had sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky', the lie detector's needle jumps through the roof," said the founder and CEO of BATM Advanced Communications, a high-tech firm in an industrial park on the outskirts of Netanya on Israel's northern coast.

Since signing a deal in December with internet telephony giant Skype, the company's server has crashed five times after tens of thousands of web users rushed to download the lie detector, offered for free.

"This is a really neat application, and the kind of thing we want to see more of," said a statement from Paul Amery, director of the Skype Developer programme.

The six employees of BATM subsidiary KishKish (www.kishkish.com), in Israel and Bulgaria, developed the add-on, which has an interface resembling a real polygraph, complete with monitors and needles.

It is one of many new applications for

internet telephony, which is rapidly becoming one of the most popular methods of communication.

The lie detector monitors in real time the stress levels in a speakers voice.

"In the end, the voice is the biggest manifesto of what we think," said Marom.

Voice stress analysis, or VSA, is a disputed technology that attempts to measure stress levels by observing the amplitude of tremors in a person's voice. The Israeli military is often cited as a major

user of this technology.

A user of the Internet lie detector needs to talk for 15 seconds to calibrate his or her voice, then sound waves start to peak if stress levels are high, a light flashes from green to red and a needle jumps to the end of a scale.

Despite little evidence to prove that lie-detecting machines work, let alone over the Internet, KishKish and Skype clients remain unfazed.

Employees spend hours responding to emails and forums from thousands of users across the

world, and they brush off criticism on their web forum from people having trouble using the tool.

"If you just make something up for the sake of it, it wont work because you wont be stressed," explained Alex Rosenbaum, 35, head of development at KishKish.

The company said it tested the tool on an insurance company that reported it was more than 90 percent accurate. It also said it had requests from police services to adapt the software, and even offers from former Russian spies to help develop it.

"I get a lot of emails about people wanting to carry out professional interviews over Skype, but we say you should check with your legal authorities," Rosenbaum said.

The lie detector warns users when they are being monitored to avoid legal problems, he added.

Working with Skype for more than a year, KishKish has developed a number of add-ons for Internet telephone services, including an answering machine, contacts book and Short Message Service (SMS), but none has been as popular as the lie detector.

KishKish sees the project as a further attempt to stretch the possibilities of Internet communications, and for now -- like many internet start ups -- it offers the product for free.