

April 9, 2006

Here's this week's roundup of recent news with regards to what's up and what matters in technology, education, and culture.

It seems that Apple and Microsoft are always in the news. This week, some of the biggest buzz revolved around Apple's new Boot Camp product which heralds the company's official support for booting and operating the Windows Operating System on the new Intel-based Mac's. Currently, the Boot Camp software is available as a download on the Apple site and will be included as part of Apple's next Operating System, Leopard. With an already-higher penetration in the education market than the general public, this announcement can do nothing but strengthen Apple's position in schools.

There were also a couple of interesting reports and polls out this week. First up, Charlene Li, a Senior Analyst at Forrester, released tidbits from her new analysis of the podcasting market and says that it is a deeply fragmented market with only 1% of online households downloading and listening to podcasts (about 700,000 in 2006). This, of course in direct contrast to the extremely optimistic forecast by the Diffusion Group who say that the "demand for time-shifted digital audio files or "podcasts" is expected to grow from less than 15% of portable digital music player owners in 2004 to 75% by 2010." What's the reality? I like Om Malik's take. He says we should see the "glass as half full. Sure it is a highly fragmented market, but still, that's a large pool of listeners and certainly larger than the number of users on most Web 2.0 start-ups."

In the mobile world, results from an AP/AOL/Pew survey were released. The results showed that people from age 18 to 29 and minorities are more likely to use their phones as personal computers, digital music players, cameras, etc. This doesn't surprise Howard Rheingold at all. The author of the book *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution*, says "We think of them as mobile phones, but the personal computer, mobile phone and the Internet are merging into some new medium like the personal computer in the 1980s or the Internet in the 1990s."

There was plenty of other mobile phone news this week as the CTIA Wireless conference took place in Las Vegas. Mobile TV was a popular meme and Motorola announced that it is taking on Slingbox and Sony's LocationFree TV with a new service that allows customers to stream TV from DVRs to their cell phones. Several other popular companies also made mobile announcements. Both MySpace and Facebook will be available from mobile phones in upcoming months and ubiquitous payment company PayPal is promoting its new mobile platform that allows payments using SMS.

Yes, it was a big week in the handheld world. In other news, the Census Bureau informed the world that it would be issuing 500,000 handhelds to its workers for the 2010 census. The devices will run Windows Mobile 5.0, have a 10-hour battery life, and include a cellular data radio that sends data to a Census office over a Sprint Nextel. Also, Adobe announced that it has signed a deal with Verizon to put its Flash software on that company's handhelds. This is Adobe's first Flash partnership in the U.S.

There were also two new movie download services announced this week. What's particularly meaningful about these is that they are backed by the major studios from Hollywood. Both MovieLink and CinemaNow feature the ability to rent or purchase movies for download. The service doesn't come cheap, however, and there are some DRM limitations you may not like.

In the world that is more narrowly education, we got updated details on the One Laptop per Child (OLPC) computer this week. The mini-laptop will be powered by a 500 MHz AMD processor, will have 128MB RAM and 512MB of flash memory for storage. It'll also include an LCD display that will switch from an

1180x830 black-and-white mode for daylight viewing to 640x480 color for indoor use. Yes, the famous hand crank is being replaced by an external device like a foot pedal, but there are talks underway to have a Windows version. This week also saw movement on the e-book front. There are new handheld devices coming out, and there was speculation about how Adobe might be able to dominate in the new e-book era.

In the edublogging space, the Higher Ed BloggerCon got underway with first-week topics including Podcasting and Screencasting, Blogging Studies, and New Approaches to Teacher and Curriculum Development. Also, the "New Story" concept launched by David Warlick several weeks ago has definitely caught on and is creating more attention all the time. This week, Dean Shareski revisited the idea with added insight, and David Warlick moved forward by proposing a project to begin collecting some of the new stories about teaching and learning to share with others.

Another topic with legs is gaming and, in particular, what education can learn from the popular entertainment form. David Warlick and Clarence Fisher both have good posts on the subject. Finally, e-books are an important issue in academia as well. The Institute for the Future of the Book has been working on its idea for an electronic academic press and Kathleen Fitzpatrick has a good post on the need for collaboration among scholars if such an effort is to succeed.

Well, that's this week's roundup. That's what's up and that's what really matters! Don't forget to check out our daily updates posted each morning on *XplanaZine*.

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