

March 26, 2006

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

This week was full of interesting announcements. To begin with, Microsoft informed the world that its next-generation operating system Vista would be... well ... would be late in arriving. Big surprise, huh? How late will it be? According to Microsoft, we can expect to see the consumer version of Vista in January, 2007. This news means that Office 2007 will be delayed for the same amount of time. This is a disappointment to customers as well as to Microsoft employees. One anonymous Microsoft employee issued a call for accountability that has resounded with many. Short-term fallout can be seen in the assigning of senior VP Steve Sinofsky, the head of its somewhat more disciplined Office group, to run the Windows division.

This week also saw another important confab in the form of the Game Developers Conference. Popular news memes from this conference included mobile gaming, serious games, recent research on gaming, and open-ended games. Sony took advantage of the occasion to announce its online service that will launch with its new PS3 console in November.

In media news, AOL TV has finally made its launch and, if you're a fan of shows like Sisters, V, Kung Fu, or La Femme Nikita, you will be in heaven. Yes, you have to watch commercials, but the service is free. In media of the more "anytime/anywhere" variety, Sling Media announced its SlingPlayer Mobile this week. The device will allow its Slingbox customers to watch television on the go with access to local channels, sports, video-on-demand, and pay-per-view programming on select Windows Mobile-based handheld devices. And, in a sign of the apocalypse for movie theaters, movie theater operators hope to be screening live 3D sports events by 2007 in a bid to lure sports fans away from their home theater systems and bolster sagging mid-week ticket sales. Their goal is to transform the way people think about movie theaters and to create new revenue streams. There has been no mention so far of micro brewery and hot wing support.

Speaking of media, what about Steve Jobs' feud with the French government? The French have passed legislation that would, among other things, require music-download stores such as Apple's iTunes to open their proprietary "digital rights management" copy-control software to users and competitors. Apple's official response to the legislation was, "The French implementation of the EU Copyright Directive will result in state-sponsored piracy." While this could result in Apple not doing business in France, some have pointed to earlier quotes from Steve Jobs that were more in line with the French legislation. In 2002, Apple's leader said, "If you legally acquire music, you need to have the right to manage it on all other devices that you own."

There was a plethora of other interesting product news this week. Dell finally confirmed the rumors that it was purchasing Alienware, and Yahoo released its Instant Message phone here in the United States. This product is designed to compete with Skype and increase Yahoo's stake in the social networking game. In e-book news, iRex released details on its new iLiad e-book reader, and author Diane Duane made good on her vow to write the last volume in her Feline Wizards trilogy as a reader-supported open e-book. Finally, if you liked the recent Google acquisition Writely, you're going to love ajaxWrite, the new product from Michael Robertson. ajaxWrite, used to create the transcript for this report, looks like Microsoft Word and acts like it. The difference? ajaxWrite is small, it's free, it's entirely Web-based, and it supports lots of other word processing formats as well.

In the education space this week, we've had plenty of strong issues at play. Wikipedia and Encyclopedia Britannica are back in the news as the Britannica folk have attacked an earlier assessment from Nature

magazine that declared the two information resources as comparable in terms of reliability. Dave Cormier has a great take on this debate in his blog. According to him, the discussion is irrelevant. "What we have now are salespeople," Dave says. "They are selling particular brands of knowledge and we need to teach our students to be good consumers."

In other education blogs, Digital Storytelling received lots of attention this week as did e-books and high stakes testing. The Digital Storytelling and high stakes testing memes were blogged in detail by Will Richardson, David Warlick, Miguel Guhlin, Wesley Fryer, and Tim Stahmer. This group framed the current NCLB testing requirements and contrasted this model of education with a more open-ended and organic model required by Digital Storytelling.

Finally, thanks to the latest issue of *Time* magazine, lots of people were asking about the pros and cons of our kids and their wired generation. We had our own takes on the issue here at XplanaZine with a podcast by Yours Truly and an article from the kids' point of view by Katrina Rinaldi.

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.

Related Articles

Microsoft delays Windows Vista

(<http://www.computerworld.com/industrytopics/smallenterprise/story/0,10801,109766,00.html>)

Microsoft shakes up staff after Vista delay (<http://be.sys-con.com/read/198797.htm>)

Anonymous insider's blog on the need for accountability at Microsoft

(<http://minimsft.blogspot.com/2006/03/vista-2007-fire-leadership-now.html>)

Game Developers Conference (<http://www.gdconf.com/>)

Sony outlines PS3 Online plans

(http://www.computerandvideogames.com/r/?page=http://www.computerandvideogames.com/news/news_story.php?id=136057)

AOL Television – In2TV (<http://television.aol.com/in2tv>)

Slingbox: TV here, there, and everywhere

(http://news.com.com/Slingbox+TV+here,+there,+everywhere/2100-1041_3-6053639.html?tag=nefd.top)

Movie theaters aim for live 3D sports (http://news.zdnet.com/2100-9584_22-6053545.html)

France takes shot at iTunes (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/25/AR2006032500102.html>)

Steve Jobs talking about interoperability (http://www.songbirdnest.com/nivi/blog/jobs_france)

Dell to acquire Alienware (http://news.com.com/Dell+to+acquire+Alienware/2100-1003_3-6052842.html)

Yahoo Instant Message Phone

(<http://www.informationweek.com/industries/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=183701692>)

iRex and the iLiad (<http://www.irextechnologies.com/shop/products/iliad.htm>)

Diane Duane's *A Wind from the South* (<http://raetiantales.blogspot.com/>)

ajaxWrite (<http://raetiantales.blogspot.com/>)

Continuing news on the Wikipedia/Britannica debate
(http://www.theregister.co.uk/2006/03/23/britannica_wikipedia_nature_study/)

Dave Cormier's take on the Wikipedia/Britannica debate (<http://davecormier.com/edblog/?p=48>)

Tim Stahmer on the high cost of high stakes testing (<http://www.assortedstuff.com/?p=1417>)

Miguel Guhlin on Digital Storytelling
(http://www.edsupport.cc/mguhlin/blog/archives/2006/03/entry_1288.htm)

Lose Star Learning – If You Don't Stop Multitasking You'll go Blind! 9
http://www.edsupport.cc/mguhlin/blog/archives/2006/03/entry_1288.htm)

Katrina Rinaldi on her multitasking generation
(http://www.xplanazine.com/archives/2006/03/students_on_stu_1.php)