Major Enhancements to .mac

Apple announced a significant update to .Mac, the membership-based online service that combines the simplicity and elegance of the Macintosh® with the power of the Internet to facilitate group communication and make sharing, storing and protecting digital photos and videos easier than ever. New features include: .Mac Groups, a service that helps members communicate, coordinate schedules and stay in sync with private groups of friends or colleagues; an updated version of .Mac Backup software that makes it easy for members to archive their iLife and other important files; a four-fold increase in combined iDisk and email storage to 1GB for individuals and 2GB for families.

".Mac provides the simple and elegant online experience consumers expect from Apple," said Rob Schoeben, Apple's vice president of Applications Marketing. "By tapping into the power of the Internet from within the applications they use the most, .Mac members around the globe have discovered a better way to experience the Internet."

New .Mac features include:

• .Mac Groups: .Mac members can now easily create private, ad-free online communities that make it easy for family, friends and private groups to communicate, coordinate and share digital media. With .Mac Groups, members can send emails to the entire group using a single address; post files, pictures and movies with a common group iDisk; publish group web pages and post links to other sites; and keep up-to-date with the latest group events with a shared iCal calendar.

Coordinator's Corner
by John Buckley

Last month was very disappointing with only four members present. Instead of looking at Mac OS 10.4, we discussed some issues that members had and the direction that GAAB should take. I sent out a flyer on what a User Group is about and what members can get from such an organization as GAAB. The direction the Group takes is very dependent on the members. I intend to discuss this in a very serious manner at the October meeting and have the Group make some very important decisions for GAAB's future.

If we are to continue, we will also plan meetings for the remainder of the year. If people are interested, I planning to present a demo of the newest version of Firefox, a web browser from the Mozilla Foundation.

To find out what's happening in the world of Macintosh Computing, GAAB is the place to be. So be sure to be at our October meeting to help chart our future.

The October meeting will be held at Troy High School in room 212 on Wednesday, October 12, 2005. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. Troy High School is located at 1950 Burdett Avenue two blocks south of Samaritan Hospital. From the Northway, take exit 7 to Alternate Route 7. Follow Alternate Route 7 to Troy. Route 7 becomes Hoosick Street in Troy. Travel east on Hoosick Street to the first light past the old closed Dunkin Donuts. This is Burdett Avenue. Turn right and travel past Samaritan Hospital for about two blocks. Troy High School will be the second school on your left. The name is on the front of the building. You can park in the front lot. Come in the main entrance, go up the main stairway to the second floor, turn left and go to room 212.

Next GAAB Meeting
October 12, 2005
7:00 p.m.

Firefox Web Browser

Troy High School
Room 212

Featured in this Issue

Serving the Apple Computer User Community Since May 1984

Officers & Special Interest Group Leaders

Program Coordinator
John Buckley
272-7128

Membership Director
Cecilia MacDonald
872-0823

Treasurer
Cecilia MacDonald
872-0823

Public Domain Librarian
Bill Shuff
393-9753

Newsletter Editor
Roger Mazula
782-1160

Education SIG
John Buckley
272-7128

Internet SIG
Lou Wozniak
465-2873

Apple Ambassador

The following article from the New York Times has some very interesting ideas concerning elegant underdogs with the Mac Mini leading the way. This article is from the online version of the New York Times, a very worthwhile resource for all news considering the price, it is free.

What do TiVo, Mac Mini have in common?
Published: October 2, 2005
by James Fallows

Today's theme is elegant underdogs: the devices or solutions that don't lead their markets but are in many ways more admirable than the ones that do.

For years the Apple Macintosh has defined this category. Indeed, the Mac's business history illustrates important changes in the role of the tech also-ran. From the mid-1980s through the late 1990s—a period that started with the widening use of Windows and ran through the widening use of the Internet—the pressures toward standardization created not just market leaders but also all-dominating market leviathans. Consider word-processing software: through the '80s and early '90s, there were a dozen contenders. Now, for practical purposes, there is only Microsoft Word.

This era of mass extinction happened to coincide with the first 15 years of the Mac's life. That it did not go the way of other innovative early computers like the Victor 9000 or the Xerox Star is testimony to the tremendous appeal of the Mac's design and the resulting fanaticism of its customer base. (Mac users, no angry e-mail messages, please. I mean this as a compliment.)

And in the last five years, some breathing room appeared. Every new approach that managed to survive—Adobe document formats, Palm and now BlackBerry mobile devices, FireFox and other browsers, Linux, and Internet-based computing from the likes of Yahoo and Google—suggested that an ever more diverse tech ecosystem was becoming possible.

This has created a new opportunity for the Mac, which Apple Computer has maximized with an exceptionally elegant offering, the Mac Mini. On the market since early this year, it is the first device to give longtime PC users a low-risk way to try that enticing other path.

Internet SIG

Lock Out Snoops and Crooks with Encryption
by Kim Komando

You probably have sensitive information like bank account numbers and personal documents on your computer. So you password-protect your Windows account and your home accounting files. Your data's safe, right? Think again.

A password might keep casual snoops out of your files. But password systems offer scant protection from experienced crooks. You'll find numerous products on the Internet, many free, that recover or reset Windows, Microsoft Word and popular accounting program passwords, to name a few. Those password environments are not secure.

To protect your sensitive files, you need to encrypt them. There are many tools that will encrypt your data. And, fortunately, the basics of encryption are easy to understand.

First, the encryption program creates a key. The longer the key, the stronger the encryption. Modern encryption is 128-bit or greater. This means there are 2^{128} possible combinations.

This level of encryption is considered unbreakable today. Computers are not yet powerful enough to attack it successfully.

Keys are used to encrypt and decrypt the data. Without the key, the data looks like gibberish. But don't let the word "key" throw you. That is just a password, which you select. Pick a longish one with letters, numbers and symbols, and you're well-protected. Use your dog's name, and you're not. It's up to you.

Let's start with Windows XP. It includes encryption abilities. To encrypt a file or folder, right-click it and select Properties. On the General tab, click Advanced. Select "Encrypt contents to secure data" and click OK. Click Apply and select your options. Click OK.

Unfortunately, Windows stores the encryption key with your user account. Anyone who knows your Windows password can automatically access your encrypted files. Or, given a little time, your Windows password, no matter how strong, could be broken. There are numerous tools available on the Web to do just that. So, XP's encryption is easy to circumvent.

Mac OS X 10.3 and later includes FileVault, which uses first-rate 128-bit encryption. The password is separate from your system password. Your home directory is automatically encrypted and decrypted. To turn on FileVault, Open System Preferences. Under Personal, select Security. Click Set Master Password to set a password that can unlock each user's FileVault. Click Turn On FileVault.

There isn't much available for earlier versions of the Mac. Try KremlinEncrypt (http://www.kremlinencrypt.com, $35) or SecretAgent (http://www.infoseccorp.com, $265).

I recommend using a third-party program to encrypt data in Windows. The free Cryptainer LE (http://www.cypherix.co.uk) creates an encrypted vault on your computer. It holds up to 25 MB of data. Simply create a key and then drag and drop your files to encrypt them. It can also be used on removable media, such as a thumb drive.

If you need more space, Cryptainer PE allows you to encrypt 25 gigabytes of data for $45. Other encryption programs include PGP Desktop Home (http://www.pgp.com), $100, Bestcrypt (http://www.jetico.com), $50, and PC-Encrypt (http://www.pc-encrypt.com), also $50.

If you're on a tighter budget, consider a ZIP program. ZIP programs compress files so they are smaller. Many offer encryption as a bonus.

WinZip (http://www.winzip.com) supports 128- or 256-bit encryption. PKZIP (http://www.pkware.com) uses 128-bit encryption. Both are $29.

One word of caution about encryption: Don't forget your password! Otherwise, you could be locked out of your files just the same as the bad guys.

Education SIG

$100 Laptop Efforts Gains Momentum
One-on-One Computing for All
By Matt Hines and M.I.T. Posting

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.—The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's plan to deliver low-cost laptop computers to children in developing nations and impoverished American students is moving forward, according to Nicholas Negroponte, chairman and co-founder of the school's Media Lab.

Speaking at M.I.T.'s ongoing Emerging Technologies Conference, Negroponte confirmed that five countries—Brazil, China, Egypt, South Africa and Thailand—are already putting plans in place to distribute as many as 15 million of the devices.

The effort has taken shape in the form of a nonprofit group launched by the Media Lab that is known as One Laptop per Child, which Negroponte first detailed at the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland, in January.

According to Negroponte, One Laptop per Child's promise is being embraced stateside as well, as Massachusetts is currently in negotiations to introduce some of the machines in its public school systems.

The program, through which government agencies are being asked to purchase the laptops, is aimed primarily at elementary-school-age children, explicitly first- and second-graders, at present.

Negroponte said the program will potentially change whole communities, making the benefits of information technology apparent to far many more people than the schoolchildren who receive the laptops.

In doing so, the devices will help cultures embrace new forms of learning that go beyond the institutional educational systems, he said.

"It's not just about the laptops, it's more about the influence of the entire program," Negroponte said.

"This is not teaching as we know it; only part of our learning comes from teaching. Much of it comes from curiosity. These are tools that can help cultivate that learning process."

A significant part of that larger effect will come from the fact that the laptops will go home with children at night, allowing their families and friends to see how the devices work, and what they have to offer, he said.

Despite the fact that the computers will be sent into some of the poorest communities on the planet, the group only expects to lose 1 percent to theft.

Negroponte said that social forces will dictate that people are careful with the devices, and discourage criminals from taking them.

The technical specifications of the $100 laptops, which are expected to be ready for shipment by the end of 2006 or early 2007, were also confirmed.

The existing design includes an innovative wind-up power source, runs on open source Linux software, and will be Wi-Fi capable.

The machines will feature a 500 MHz processor and 1GB of onboard memory.

The expert admits that one of the biggest challenges in delivering on One Laptop per Child's goal may be getting the laptops built in time, and on budget.

The group has undertaken the lofty goal of building one million of the devices in its first run, and eventually hopes to mandate 100 million of the machines.

Negroponte said that designing the devices is a continuing challenge, as, in contrast to traditional computers, they will need to become less sophisticated and cheaper with each generation.

However, he said that the group's work with its corporate partners—Advanced Micro Devices Inc., Brightstar Corp., Google Inc., News Corp. and Red Hat Inc.—is already helping to overcome such obstacles.

One solution could be the use of a dual-mode, flexible LCD display being developed at M.I.T., which may allow for a 12-inch screen that costs only $12 to build.

Other technological hurdles are being addressed by features such as the wind-up power system, which will augment conventional batteries and electric current adaptors.

By using Linux software tuned to work in individual nations, the machines will also eliminate the need for two-thirds of the software on traditional laptops, Negroponte said.

One of the more interesting moments of the presentation came during a question-and-answer session, when an individual who had set up a computer network in Guatemala described coming back to check on the machines and finding them loaded with pornography.

Negroponte said that his experience working to set up computers in Cambodia didn't provide similar results, and that he believes the laptops won't be used for inappropriate purposes.

"We didn't find porn, or that people were using the computers to access terrorist Web sites," he said. "Part of the impact of this program must be to use education to control all those negative forces out there; this is a way we can help solve those problems using the technology."

Here Negroponte answers questions on the initiative.

What is the $100 Laptop, really?
The proposed $100 machine will be a Linux-based, full-color, full-screen laptop that will use innovative power (including wind-up) and will be able to do most everything except store huge amounts of data. These rugged laptops will be WiFi- and cell phone-enabled, and have USB ports galore. Its current specifications are: 500MHz, 1GB, 1 Megapixel.

Why do children in developing nations need laptops?
Laptops are both a window and a tool: a window into the world and a tool with which to think. They are a wonderful way for all children to "learn learning" through independent interaction and exploration.

Why not a desktop computer, or—even better—a recycled desktop machine?
Desktops are cheaper, but mobility is important, especially with regard to taking the computer home at night. Kids in the developing world need the newest technology, especially really rugged hardware and innovative software. Recent work with schools in Maine has shown the huge value of using a laptop across all of one's studies, as well as for play. Bringing the laptop home engages the family. In one Cambodian village where we have been working, there is no electricity, thus the laptop is, among other things, the brightest light source in the home.

Finally, regarding recyled machines: if we estimate 100 million available used desktops, and each one requires only one hour of human attention to refurbish, reload, and handle, that is forty-five thousand work years. Thus, while we definitely encourage the recycling of used computers, it is not the solution for One Laptop per Child.

How is it possible to get the cost so low?
- First, by dramatically lowering the cost of the display. The first-generation machine may use a novel, dual-mode LCD display commonly found in inexpensive DVD players, but that can also be used in black and white, in bright sunlight, and at four times the normal resolution—all at a cost of approximately $35.
- Second, we will get the fat out of the systems. Today's laptops have become obese. Two-thirds of their software is used to manage the other third, which mostly does the same functions nine different ways.
- Third, we will market the laptops in very large numbers (millions), directly to ministries of education, which can distribute them like textbooks.

Why is it important for each child to have a computer? What's wrong with community-access centers?
One does not think of community pencils—kids have their own. They are tools to think with, sufficiently inexpensive to be used for work and play, drawing, writing, and mathematics. A computer can be the same, but far more powerful. Furthermore, there are many reasons it is important for a child to "own" something—like a football, doll, or book—not the least of which being that these belongings will be well-maintained through love and care.

What about connectivity? Aren't telecommunications services expensive in the developing world?
When these machines pop out of the box, they will make a mesh network of their own, peer-to-peer. This is something initially developed at MIT and the Media Lab. We are also exploring ways to connect them to the backbone of the Internet at very low cost.

What can a $1000 laptop do that the $100 version can't?
Not much. The plan is for the $100 Laptop to do almost everything. What it will not do is store a massive amount of data.

How will these be marketed?
The idea is to distribute the machines through those ministries of education willing to adopt a policy of "One Laptop per Child." Initial discussions have been held with China, Brazil, Thailand, and Egypt. Additional countries will be selected for beta testing. Initial orders will be limited to a minimum of one million units (with appropriate financing).

When do you anticipate these laptops reaching the market? What do you see as the biggest hurdles?
Our preliminary schedule is to have units ready for shipment by the end of 2006 or early 2007.

The biggest hurdle will be manufacturing 100 million of anything. This is not just a supply-chain problem, but also a design problem. The scale is daunting, but I find myself amazed at what some companies are proposing to us. It feels as though at least half the problems are being solved by mere resolve.

How will this initiative be structured?
The three principals at MIT are faculty members at the Media Lab: Nicholas Negroponte (a founder of the Lab), Joe Jacobson (serial entrepreneur, co-founder and director of E Ink), and Seymour Papert (one of the world's leading theorists on child learning).

Additional researchers include: Mike Bove, Mary Lou Jepsen, Alan Kay, Tod Machover, Mitchel Resnick, and Ted Selker.

Organizationally, MIT will work with a small number of companies of complementary skills to develop a fully working and manufactured laptop (50,000 to 100,000 units) in fewer than 12 months, with an eye on building about 100 million to 200 million units by the following year. Five initial companies who have committed to this project are AMD, Brightstar, Google, News Corporation, and Red Hat. MIT will also work with the not-for-profit company One Laptop per Child (OLPC), as well as with the 2B1 Foundation.

Apple Ambassador

The Mini is a flattened white cube, smaller than most hardback books. It has no keyboard, no screen—it is just that cube with a variety of ports on one side allowing connections to most normal computer peripherals. To be precise, the Mini comes with an Ethernet jack, a connector for a video monitor, and one FireWire and two standard USB sockets.

What this means in practice is that a PC user can plug most of the devices already on hand directly into the Mini, with a slight jiggering of the keyboard and mouse connectors in some instances, and probably an extra USB hub if there are several devices to connect. All of this is easier than it sounds.

Less than five minutes after I had taken the Mini out of its box, I was sitting at my desk typing on my usual keyboard, looking at the usual flat-panel display, automatically connected to the Internet through the usual Wi-Fi link, with pages coming out of the usual printer—but now I was using Mac software, under the Apple operating system OSX. No configuration was required for anything. With more serious jiggering, you can set up a system that, with the turn of a switch, lets you go back and forth between displaying what's on your PC and what's on your Mac.

By Apple standards, the Mini is cheap: around $500 to $700, depending on the options. And it goes a long way toward addressing the PC user's concern that whatever the Mac's benefits, they couldn't possibly be worth the nuisance of transition. You can use a home network to transfer data files from one system to another, or use certain applications on each machine rather than making a total change. The Mini's existence is no longer news, but it is worth re-emphasizing because of the choices it creates.

TiVo deserves similar recognition, and not just because its evangelizing users can rival the Mac's. Though it was the pioneer in easily programmable home video recorders, TiVo has been struggling commercially, especially because DirecTV has canceled its TiVo promotions and begun selling recorders of its own. Nonetheless, some elegant advances distinguish it from the generic competitors.

One is online scheduling, the answer to that modern heartbreak of leaving the house without remembering to set TiVo to record a show. From an Internet connection anywhere in the world, you can give instructions to your home machine as if you were standing in front of it.

TiVo's other recent innovation is a home-networking option that lets you transfer the recorded programs to your own computers, using Wi-Fi or some other network. The files are enormous, roughly one gigabyte per hour of air time. They also have security features to keep them from being passed around to other users, Napster-style. But the TiVo owner can easily take along the programs to watch on a laptop while traveling, or burn them into DVDs to watch somewhere else. Next is a truly obscure underdog: software called BrainStorm, created and sold by two independent programmers in England. Its kind of elegance, quite distinct from the style and polish of the Mac or TiVo, is the stripped-down functional beauty of an excellent sharpened knife.

BrainStorm is a return to the early days of personal computing, in its resemblance to outstanding DOS-era programs like XyWrite and GrandView. Its display is text only, with no graphic grace notes, and the only thing it does is manage lists—of ideas, tasks, references, names. Behind this simplicity is surprising power, or so I have found since buying it on a friend's recommendation several months ago. The program makes it very quick and easy to add, subtract, rearrange, or reconsider information you are working with.

BrainStorm is not for everyone. Fortunately, it offers a 30-day free trial. The normal price is 40 pounds, or about $70, but it costs half that much if you go to Brainstormsw.com/welcome.html and enter the "secret" code 2534. (Eccentrically, the company prefers this roundabout discount to just having a sale.)

Coincident with the release of the latest BrainStorm are new, significantly improved versions of two other "thinking tool" programs I have mentioned before. One is MindManager, a leader rather than an underdog in mind mapping, or organizing ideas graphically. Its latest version, 6.0, has many new features—including one that can embed an Excel spreadsheet in a mind map—and is available for a 21-day free trial from its maker, Mindjet of Larkspur, Calif.

The other program, ResultsManager, from Gyronix, another tiny British company, can very effectively parse the data in a large number of MindManager files and create "dashboards" showing, say, what chores are due next Tuesday. Its new version is available for a 21-day free trial from Gyronix.com. The richly visual approach of these two programs is the opposite of BrainStorm's, but they must connect with different parts of my brain, because I use all three often.

One other update: Jimmy Carter (disclosure: I once worked for him as a speechwriter) qualifies as elegant for how he has managed his postpresidency. He qualifies as an underdog because—well, everyone knows. Last month, he and James A. Baker III, the former secretary of state, released a report on how to make the electoral system more trustworthy. Baker has his own kind of expertise, having directed the Bush team in the 2000 Florida recount. Most discussion of the report has centered on its recommendation for a national ID card. Barely noticed have been its proposals for making electronic voting tamper-proof and reliable, as discussed here last fall—especially by requiring paper receipts, like those issued by ATMs, to create a verifiable audit trail. The report is available on the American University Web site at www.american.edu/Carter-Baker. It deserves close attention.

.Mac Improvements

• Backup 3: .Mac Backup has been redesigned from the ground up resulting in easier setup, quicker backups and the ability to seamlessly automate the process so users don't have to remember to run a backup. New features include the ability to automatically back up iLife content, Home folder, iTunes® purchased music, and other Mac® essentials. Built-in Mac OS® X "Tiger" Spotlight™ search capabilities make it easy to select specific files to backup, while incremental backups help to save time and media costs.

• Increased Online Storage: .Mac members now have four times more online storage space than before to host their email messages, documents and digital media files. Storage for individual members has increased to 1GB of combined email and iDisk space, .Mac Family Pack customers now receive 2GB of combined storage. Members can utilize their storage any way they choose dedicating more or less storage space to email or their iDisk. Individuals or Family Pack members can optionally purchase an additional 1GB of storage for $49.95 (US) annually.

In addition to these new features, other .Mac services include: HomePage, for simple yet attractive personal web sites with just a few clicks; iDisk, a virtual hard drive in the sky for providing access to files from anywhere at any time; .Mac Sync, which keeps Safari bookmarks, iCal calendars, Address Book information, keychains (passwords), and Mac OS X Mail preferences up-to-date across multiple Macs and available via web browser when users are away from their Mac; .Mac Mail, a world-class, ad-free email service; and Learning Center, featuring tutorials for popular Apple software applications.

Enhancements to .Mac take online communication and sharing to the next level by opening up HomePage, iDisk, Mail and iCal to groups of friends, colleagues and acquaintances, providing members with more online storage space to house their increasingly growing digital media assets, all while making the process of backing up their valuable memories easier than ever.

GAAB Internet Addresses

Will Aubrey ....waubrey@neric.org
Steve Bradley ....ssbradley@adelphia.net
John Buckley ....johnb179@aol.com
                                      buckleyj@troy.k12.ny.us
Anthony Eldering ....tonye@nycap.rr.com
Harold Flax ....hflax1@nycap.rr.com
Lilajane Frascarelli ....frascl@rpi.edu
Les Goldstein ....lgoldst1@nycap.rr.com
Dan Gonsiewski ....dgonsiewski@yahoo.com
Richard Hester ....hesterFP@capital.net
Bruce Hodsoll ....bhodsoll@nycap.rr.com
George Johnsen ....gjohnsen@sprynet.com
Cecilia MacDonald..........cecilia@midtel.net
Stella Zuris Mallon ....SunnyStela@adelphia.net
Mike Mannarino ....rfd230@nycap.rr.com
Roger Mazula ....aluzam@aol.com
                                      rmazula1@nycap.rr.com
Brendan O'Hara ....bohara1@nycap.rr.com
Robert/Rose Ostrander ...theostranders@earthlink.net
Bill Shuff ....wjs206@earthlink.net
Eric/Lee Rieker ....Erieker@aol.com
Ellie Smith ....eas715@aol.com
Jen Rice ....jrice001@nycap.rr.com
Roy Stevens ....roystevens@aol.com
Terry Tyler ....tylerbears@airstream.net
Edward Walsh...................ewalsh@nycap.rr.com
Lou Wozniak.....................louw@nycap.rr.com

Directions

Troy Hight School is on Burdett Avenue in Troy. Take Alternate Route 7 into Troy (it becomes Hoosick Street), turn right on Burdett Avenue. The school is past Samaritan Hospital, on the left. Call an officer if you need additional directions.

To start or renew your GAAB membership, see Cecilia MacDonald or send your fees payable to her at the following address:

Cecilia MacDonald
260 Sever Road
Delanson, NY 12053

The GAB'er

c/o Roger C. Mazula, Editor
12 Shelbourne Drive
Loudonville, NY 12211

Map to the Plum Blossom: 685 Hoosick Rd., Troy, NY

Visit GAAB on the Internet at http://homepage.mac.com/applebyters

Google offers S.F. Wi-Fi — for free

Company's bid is one of many in response to mayor's call for universal online access

by Verne Kopytoff, Ryan Kim, San Francisco Chronicle

Google Inc. has offered to blanket San Francisco with free wireless Internet access at no cost to the city, placing a marquee name behind Mayor Gavin Newsom's effort to get all residents online whether they are at home, in a park or in a cafe.

The offer by the popular Mountain View search engine was one of more than a dozen competing bids received by the city before its deadline Friday. Officials will review the submissions and decide which, if any, of the candidates gets the green light to build the so called Wi-Fi service, which would be free or inexpensive for users.

In joining the competition, Google is showing yet another sign of its ambition. In the past few months, the company has released a succession of new products, including instant messaging and Internet telephone calls, that take it further from its roots.

The proposal raises speculation that Google intends to create a free national Wi-Fi network, a business in which the company has limited experience. If so, it could pose a serious challenge to existing Internet service providers such as SBC-Yahoo, Earthlink, Comcast and America Online, which charge subscriptions for wire connections.

"This is a great opportunity to provide a community service to the Bay Area," said Chris Sacca, who oversaw Google's bid in San Francisco. "This furthers the goal of providing access to all residents and visitors on as wide a scale as possible."

Newsom set a goal of a free or inexpensive city-wide Wi-Fi network last year. He portrayed the idea as a way to boost San Francisco's technology credentials and help bring Internet have-nots — especially the poor — into the digital age.

Since then, officials have been weighing how to carry out the plan despite a tight budget. Over the summer, they opened a window for proposals called a "request for information" that immediately drew attention from an array of companies.

Peter Ragone, a spokesman for the mayor, said a decision about a winner would be made "in weeks, not months." He added that Google had no advantage because of its high profile and that the ultimate decision would be based on what was in their plans.

As part of its 100-page bid, Google said it could install a Wi-Fi network without cost to the city. Users with Wi-Fi-enabled computers could then log on to basic service, without paying, no matter where they are within the city limits.

The speed of basic service would be 300 kilobits per second, which is much faster than dial-up Internet service but slower than some broadband.

Sacca said that Google, which makes virtually all its money from online advertising, had yet to determine whether it would include ads in the service. But Google said it would make its Wi-Fi network available for a fee to companies that want to offer paid Internet services. Sacca said there were no plans to share any revenue with the city.

San Francisco is a notoriously difficult city for blanket Wi-Fi coverage because of its hills, valleys and tall buildings. To ensure a good signal, Google would install up to 30 small Wi-Fi antennas per square mile.

Competitors who submitted responses to the city's request said Google's proposal was not entirely surprising. But they questioned the company's ability to follow through on its plans.

Donald Berryman, executive vice president of municipal networks for Earthlink, asked whether Google had the know-how to be an Internet service provider. And providing the deal for free, he said, is not sustainable in the long run.

"We've looked into free service, and we haven't found a model where free works," said Berryman. "At some point free becomes less sustainable because there's no way to upgrade service and the networks when no one's paying for it."

Google's experience in Wi-Fi is limited to tests at a gym and cafe near its headquarters and at Bryant Park in New York City. Google also sponsors free Wi-Fi service in San Francisco's Union Square in conjunction with a local start-up, Feeva.

For now, Google's Sacca said his company's Wi-Fi ambitions were limited to the Bay Area. However, others believe Google has much bigger plans.

"This is really exciting because they're not going to just do this in San Francisco, if they are serious about it," said Jeff Thompson, a founder of TowerStream, a company in Middletown, R.I., that sells wireless Internet connections to businesses, including some in San Francisco, but did not submit a proposal to the city.

Chuck Haas, CEO of MetroFi, which runs two Wi-Fi networks in Cupertino and Santa Clara, wondered whether

Google would meet the city's goals for coverage.

But he said the idea of free service was not entirely far-fetched. He said his company had submitted a proposal in which wireless broadband would be free across San Francisco but would be paid for with ads and would have no technical support or services for users. For $19.99 a month, subscribers would get enhanced service with no ads and customer support.

"I believe we'll have enough people that want full security and customer support with no ads that we could make money," Haas said. "But no matter who the city chooses, I don't think the city will have to pay for this network."

SBC spokesman John Britton said his company encourages competition but believes that governments should seek greater investment from private companies to increase broadband service. He said San Francisco already was served by SBC and enjoyed more than 400 free Wi-Fi hotspots, more than any other city in the country.

"We feel there is already widespread broadband available today," Britton said.

Some of the existing systems are along parts of Castro, Fillmore and Chestnut streets and are provided by AnchorFree Wireless, which also made a proposal to cover the entire city with free Wi-Fi at a cost one of the Sunnyvale

company's founders estimated at $10 million.

Vince Vasquez, a policy fellow with the Pacific Research Institute, a think tank that supports free markets and receives funding from SBC, said he opposed any municipal involvement in Wi-Fi. Even if it's free, it may exceed the city's proper role in a sector that should be left to private industries, he said.

"Our concern is with public money and publicly controlled Internet access," said Vasquez. "We take a lot of caution about how government should intervene in the market."

Vigilance, Resilience Key to Cyber Security, Says New York State Official

by Wayne Hanson, *Government Technology*

"We just did a phishing exercise to 10,000 desktops," said William F. Pelgrin, director of the New York State Office of Cyber Security and Critical Infrastructure Coordination. "We sent out a generic advisory on phishing, and no one was aware there would be an exercise to follow."

About a month after the advisory, an e-mail arrived on those agency desktops. It came from outside, but appeared to be from state government. It said that since security was so important, and that passwords were the first line of defense, the state had developed a password checker for state employees. "It asked them to enter their personal password and user ID to see how good their passwords were," said Pelgrin. "Out of 10,000 employees, we had about 17 percent that fell prey to it at that time. A month or so later we went back to the same cohort of individuals to see if they learned from the educational component of this, and we cut our numbers down to about seven percent. Now," he said, "the job is to get to those seven percent."

Pelgrin said the approach was "warm and fuzzy." Commissioners of affected agencies signed off on the exercise beforehand and looked at all documents before they were sent. And no information was collected on who fell for the ruse, just aggregate statistics. Those that provided a password and user ID got a message telling them what the exercise was all about, a video explaining the dangers of providing the information, and a survey.

"From the survey," said Pelgrin, "We got a lot of responses that it taught them something about phishing, not only at work — since we filter out a lot of that crud here — but at home where you get much more of it."

"This is about vigilance and resilience," he said. "One hundred percent security will never be obtainable. If you think you're safe, you're not secure. 9/11 taught us not to say things won't occur. Vigilance has to be there. Cars are becoming safer every day but you still need to buckle your seat belt."

In keeping with that premise, Pelgrin has expanded the efforts of his office to educate and inform state and local government, law enforcement, and the public. His office — along with the Department of Homeland Security's National Cyber Security Division and other organizations — developed a cyber-security awareness program for New York, that other state and local governments around the country are invited to use.

New York Governor E. Pataki proclaimed October as Cyber Security Awareness Month for the state, and Pelgrin and others are working to expand the idea nationwide, providing materials and programs to state and local governments.

"We do a Web cast every other month," said Pelgrin. "It started out as a New York State effort and quickly became a national one, and is now international. We've had up to nine countries participate in those Web casts. I choose the topic area, and we look for vendors that could do the presentation. They are not

unique to any vendor, they have to be generic ... things that people could take and actually implement to make themselves more secure than they were the day before.

"We've done vulnerability risk assessments," he said, "taught people how to identify spyware, adware, and what to do about it. Over the last year, we've done about seven of those.

Protecting Children

"For October," said Pelgrin, "our theme is protecting children on the Internet. The slogan is: 'It's everyone's responsibility' Parents, teachers, law enforcement, government — everyone needs to take a role to ensure our children are protected and also that children don't become the next hacking generation. We're really concerned that we've got to change the culture that a script kiddie [definition link] is not a right of passage — it's wrong. We need to teach cyber ethics. We're all told that it's wrong to steal physical items, and only recently have we begun to teach kids that it's wrong to download copyrighted music. How can we make them good cyber citizens, how can we build into this culture?

"Our governor has asked me to put on a major conference Oct. 20th," said Pelgrin, "and GTC is partnering with us on it. There will be about 1,000 adults, with a separate track for about 1,200 fourth and fifth graders. For the children we've hired a company ... which will do an interactive play on cyber security for the children. It will be streaming video and we're filming that and it will be broadcast by satellite, and we will make available to state and local governments."

"We're asking schools across the country to participate by having classrooms set up. We're using some of the curriculum from Cybersmart as the basis for that scripting.

The governor will keynote the conference, said Pelgrin. We have Alan Paller, director of research for the SANS Institute as second keynote, and we have Patrick Gray, director of X-Force Operations for ISS, doing the third keynote. And Howard Schmidt will be doing the VIP reception the night before."

As if that weren't enough, Pelgrin has also contributed an introduction to a book coming out next year, *The Black Book on Government Security.*

"Computer technology was really created as an enabler to make our lives more efficient more effective, to be able to communicate, provide customers with better service, promote e-commerce, etc.," he said. "Cyber security was always looked at as the impediment — it's going to cost money, take time, etc. Now, though," he said, "because of attacks on technology, cyber security has changed from an impediment to an enabler ... We're to the point where security is critical, it's not an afterthought.

"If security doesn't get down to the desktop level, he said, "we'll all lose."

phishing (fish´ing) **(n.)** The act of sending an e-mail to a user falsely claiming to be an established legitimate enterprise in an attempt to scam the user into surrendering private information that will be used for identity theft. The e-mail directs the user to visit a Web site where they are asked to update personal information, such as passwords and credit card, social security, and bank account numbers, that the legitimate organization already has. The Web site, however, is bogus and set up only to steal the user's information. For example, 2003 saw the proliferation of a phishing scam in which users received e-mails supposedly from eBay claiming that the user's account was about to be suspended unless he clicked on the provided link and updated the credit card information that the genuine eBay already had. Because it is relatively simple to make a Web site look like a legitimate organizations site by mimicking the HTML code, the scam counted on people being tricked into thinking they were actually being contacted by eBay and were subsequently going to eBay's site to update their account information. By spamming large groups of people, the "phisher" counted on the e-mail being read by a percentage of people who actually had listed credit card numbers with eBay legitimately.

Phishing, also referred to as *brand spoofing* or *carding*, is a variation on "fishing," the idea being that bait is thrown out with the hopes that while most will ignore the bait, some will be tempted into biting.

script kiddie A person, normally someone who is not technologically sophisticated, who randomly seeks out a specific weakness over the Internet in order to gain root access to a system without really understanding what it is he is exploiting because the weakness was discovered by someone else. A script kiddie is not looking to target specific information or a specific company but rather uses knowledge of a vulnerability to scan the entire Internet.
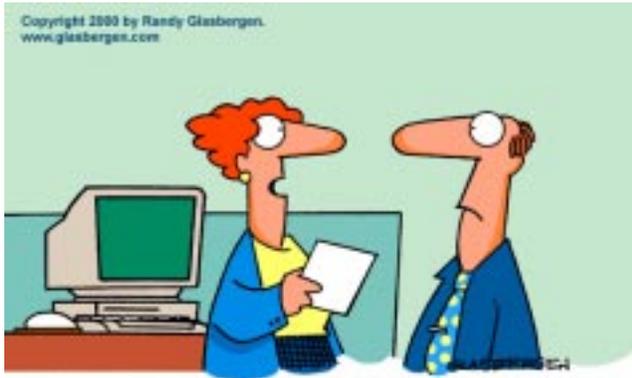
© 1999 Randy Glasbergen.
www.glasbergen.com

"The moment we met in the chatroom,
I could tell that you were better than those
other wild animals who hang out there!"

© 2000 Randy Glasbergen.   www.glasbergen.com

"Last night Marty and I got more intimate
than we've ever been...we revealed our
internet passwords to each other!"

Copyright 2000 by Randy Glasbergen.
www.glasbergen.com

"OUR COMPETITION LAUNCHED THEIR WEB SITE, STOLE ALL
OF OUR CUSTOMERS AND PUT US OUT OF BUSINESS
WHILE YOU WERE IN THE JOHN."

Copyright 2004 by Randy Glasbergen.
www.glasbergen.com

"Our anti-spam software deleted your report because the
flow chart was shaped sort of like a Nigerian prince."
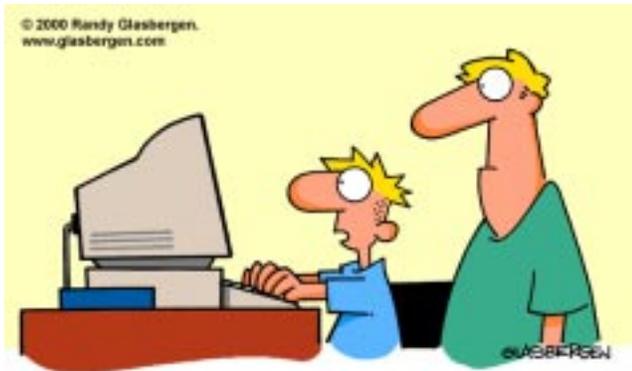
© 2000 Randy Glasbergen.
www.glasbergen.com

"A lot of girls hang out in the chat rooms.
Does our virus software scan for cooties?"

Copyright 2003 by Randy Glasbergen.
www.glasbergen.com

"MOM SAYS I CAN ONLY USE THE COMPUTER THREE HOURS A DAY.
IT TAKES LONGER THAN THAT JUST TO DELETE MY SPAM!"

GAB'er