



### Top Stories

#### Mujahedeen Army issues threat of attack on Vatican City

The Mujahedeen Army or Army of the Mujaidines, a group of insurgents in Iraq has posted a message on the internet threatening attacks on Vatican City in Rome, Italy.

#### Princeton report questions electronic voting machine security

Researchers at Princeton university report that Diebold AccuVote-TS electronic voting machines are vulnerable to extremely serious attacks that can steal votes, remain undetected and spread to other machines. Diebold disputes the findings

### Featured story

#### USA beats NZ in the Wheelchair Rugby Championships 2006

The United States of America have beaten the New Zealand Wheel Blacks to win the 2006 Wheelchair Rugby Championships.

### Wikipedia Current Events

- Winners of the 2006 Lasker Awards for medical research are announced.
- Pope Benedict XVI's security has increased due to the controversy.
- Pope Benedict XVI is quoted as saying that he is "very upset" and "sorry" that his comments

### Wikipedia Current Events

regarding Islam on Tuesday offended Muslims.

- Violence erupts when Palestinian militants bombed and engaged in shootings against five churches in the West Bank.
- Hurricane Lane strengthens to a Category 3 hurricane with nearly 125 mph winds as it approaches Mexico's Pacific coast.
- Hurricane Lane has weakened to a Category 1 hurricane after striking the Pacific coast of Mexico.
- On the eve of the International Day for Darfur, British Prime Minister Tony Blair insists the government of Sudan must start to "live up to its obligations" towards the war-torn region.
- Iraq insurgency: Baghdad police find 47 corpses across the city, most bound and shot, thought to be more victims of the ongoing sectarian killing that has been taking place in the region and appears aimed at provoking civil war.
- Bagged spinach recalled in United States after products linked to at least 94 cases of E. coli in 19 states.
- A Delta Airlines flight makes an emergency landing at Shannon Airport in Ireland. The flight was en route to New York from Shannon itself, and had 276 passengers on board. It was reported that there was smoke in the cabin.

### Pope Benedict apologizes for "sounding offensive" to Muslims

In Tuesday's speech the Pope quoted a 14th Century Christian emperor who said the Prophet Muhammad had brought the world only "evil and inhuman" things. The comment created angry protests among the Muslim community. Today, Vatican secretary of state Tarcisio Bertone issued a statement that quotes "The Holy Father is very sorry that some passages of his speech may have sounded offensive to the sensibilities of Muslim believers". Other than that, Bertone added that the Pope is sorry that his statements had been badly interpreted.

Various street demonstrations have been held in Pakistan, India, Turkey and Gaza in the past days. Moreover leading religious leaders and politicians have also criticised the remarks. Some even rejected the pope's apology stating that the apology did not go far enough (Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood).

### PDPC President Rob Levin has died

The president of the Peer-Directed Projects Center, Rob Levin, has today passed away after being hit by a car whilst riding his bike on Tuesday. He is survived by his wife Debbie and his son Benjamin.

Mr. Levin was known to many as "lilo", his favoured IRC moniker. He entered a coma after being struck by the vehicle on Tuesday. It is believed he was not wearing a

cycle helmet at the time of the collision. The incident is being treated as a hit and run.

A global notice on freenode was sent:

[17:18] -christel- [Global Notice]  
On the 12th September Rob Levin, known to many as Freenode's lilo, was hit by a car while riding his bike. He suffered head injuries and passed away in hospital on the 16th. For more information please visit #freenode-announce

His funeral will be held in Houston, Texas. He was 50 years old at the time of death.

A special e-mail address, condolences[at]freenode[dot]net, has been setup for people to send their messages to. All messages sent to this address will be published in the online "Book of Memories" and passed on to his wife and family.

### **Princeton report questions electronic voting machine security**

Researchers at Princeton University have conducted research into the security of electronic voting machines. They have created a virus that could breach voting machines and change votes. The creators of the voting machine say the research was unrealistic.

Edward William Felten, a professor of computer sciences and public affairs at Princeton University, and two Princeton graduate students, Ariel Feldman and Alex Halderman, created a computer virus that they say could remain concealed in tests, "steal" votes, delete itself to go undetected and spread to other machines.

They used a Diebold AccuVote-TS which is a small computer with a

touch screen. The latest version of the software used 128-bit data encryption, digitally signed memory card data, secure socket layer (SSL) data encryption for transmitting results and dynamic passwords.

They opened the draw with a key, picked the lock or undid screws to open the compartment that allows them to change the memory card. They suppressed the beep created by the computer when it reboots by using headphones. They say the virus can spread by using the same memory card which when inserted into a different machine infect the machine.

The researchers say they received the machine they tested on from someone who wants to keep anonymous

"You have to be a good programmer — not a genius — to do this," Halderman said. "I believe a good programmer could reproduce our virus without very much effort."

"Analysis of the machine...shows that it is vulnerable to extremely serious attacks," the report states. "An attacker who gets physical access to a machine or its removable memory card for as little as a minute could install malicious code."

Diebold Election Systems president Dave Byrd said that the research was done with security software that were two generations old.

"By any standard--academic or common sense--the study is unrealistic and inaccurate," said he in a statement.

"Normal security procedures were ignored. Numbered security tape, 18 enclosure screws and

numbered security tags were destroyed or missing so that the researchers could get inside the unit. A virus was introduced to a machine that is never attached to a network."

"Every voter in every local jurisdiction that uses the AccuVote-TS should feel secure knowing that their vote will count on Election Day,"

"That's what they were saying a few years ago," said Halderman. He said he would very much like to study Diebold's newer machines and software. "We expect and fear, unfortunately, that if we were to examine the newer version of the software, we could find similar problems."

### **A fifth of American kids projected to become obese**

A report released on September 13 called "Progress in Preventing Childhood Obesity: How Do We Measure Up?" states that if strict measures are not implemented, in just four years, over 20 percent of American children will be obese. The report called current measures aimed at tackling childhood obesity "fragmented and small-scale".

The report was released by the Institute of Medicine, but including an explicit disclaimer that 'Any opinions, findings, conclusions, are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the organization [Institute of Medicine, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation] that provided support for the project.'

Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, president of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the organization that funded the report, said "if we do not reverse the epidemic of childhood obesity, millions of kids

and our society will be robbed of a healthy and hopeful future". The percentage of children who are overweight or obese has been increasing worldwide in recent years. Food Consumer reports that according to the World Health Organization (WHO), childhood overweight and obesity is a "global pandemic".

According to an estimate based on the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), 34 percent of American children were overweight in 2003-2004, compared to 28 percent in 1999-2000. In 2002, 16 percent of American children and teens were obese. In 2004, the rate was 17 percent. The rate is expected to rise to 20 percent, according to the report.

Childhood obesity increases risk of several chronic diseases, including diabetes mellitus type 2, hypertension, obstructive sleep apnea, non-alcoholic steatohepatitis, heart disease, poor self-esteem, and a lower health-related quality of life. Type 2 diabetes is at an all-time high in American children. According to WHO, obesity also increases the risk of stroke and certain forms of cancer.

While there is no single cause of childhood obesity, experts cite sedentary lifestyle, labor-saving technology, not eating enough fruits and vegetables, calorie-dense fast foods, and deceptive advertising as some of the main causes. A recent report by International Obesity Task Force has said that junk food manufacturers target children, for example, through Internet advertising, chat rooms, text messages, and "advergames" on websites.

The article also mentions the greater prevalence of obesity among two minority populations, African-Americans and Hispanic/Latino, but does not consider in its analysis of the increase in obesity the increase of these these populations as a proportion of the United States population.

African-Americans and Hispanic/Latinos have a higher rates of obesity than White Americans, while Asian-Americans have a relatively low rate of obesity. Despite only representing one third of the U.S. population, African-Americans and Hispanic/Latinos represent about one half of the population growth.

### **Folk musician Tracy Grammer corrects record on Dave Carter**

Folk musician Tracy Grammer, formerly of the duo Dave Carter and Tracy Grammer, has posted to Wikipedia to correct misrepresentations and misconceptions about her time with Dave Carter, who died of a heart attack in July of 2002. Grammer addressed the persistent rumors about whether she and Carter were involved in a romantic relationship, confirming that they entered into one in 1997, a year after they met, and had lived together from 1999 to 2002, although their relationship had been "in transition" at the time of Carter's death as he began pursuing a gender change in May of 2002. Prior to her comments on Wikipedia, the only public comment on the matter had been the repeated assertion that Carter and Grammer were "partners in all things" due to their desire to "keep the focus on their music."

Grammer also explained why she did not own the rights to Carter's songwriting catalogue, stating that

the rights passed to Carter's ex-wife due to a will dating from before Carter and Grammer began their partnership. Grammer's offer to purchase the catalogue was rejected, and after "considerable acrimony," the catalogue was purchased by Carter's sister, Elise Fischer, who made arrangements with Grammer to administer the catalogue.

An album, *Seven is the Number*, containing Dave Carter's final recordings with Tracy Grammer will be released in October.

### **USA beats NZ in the Wheelchair Rugby Championships 2006**

The United States of America have beaten the New Zealand Wheelchair Blacks to win the 2006 Wheelchair Rugby Championships, the fourth championship ever held.

The final score was 34-30 at Christchurch, New Zealand's Westpac Stadium. The Americans had led by one point following the first quarter, 9-8, and went into half time with the US leading 16-15, but the lead spaced further apart going into the final quarter, 25-23.

US and New Zealand, the Athens 2004 paralympic champions, had played each other previously in the tournament with US coming out winner 42-34.

Grant Sharman, New Zealand Wheel Blacks coach, said: "The Wheel Blacks did not quite have their 'A game' in the final today and the Americans played extremely well."

US played a near-faultless game of wheelchair rugby, which won them the match.

The defending champions,

Canada, finished third place overall by defeating Great Britain 23-19.

The final standings were:

1. USA
2. New Zealand
3. Canada
4. Great Britain
5. Japan
6. Australia
7. Germany
8. Belgium
9. Sweden
10. Netherlands
11. Switzerland
12. Denmark

### **Dixie Chicks show documentary at TIFF**

The Dixie Chicks screened their new documentary, "Dixie Chicks: Shut Up and Sing", at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

Directed by Cecilia Peck and Barbara Kopple, the documentary follows the group from the London gig in 2003 in which lead singer Natalie Maines said she was "ashamed" George W. Bush came from Texas to the release of their latest album. Even though their latest album has gone platinum, the Country Music Association has not nominated them for the CMA Awards, and many radio stations still do not play their music. But despite the controversy, the Dixie Chicks are in the media, getting good reviews.

"When Natalie made her comments particularly from the country music box, there was no community, they were out there all on their own," said Kopple. "Our hope with this film, is that people will see it and no longer will the Chicks stand alone." [1] "They never asked me to apologize. We never debated that," said Maines. "What I said can come off as silly or whatever

and just everything that has happened since then, it's more of a disgrace, just watching the footage from Hurricane Katrina, it's unbelievable." "At this stage, I don't think that I am pissing off any new people," she commented. "Yes, thank God for Canada," said Maines, noting the band found political support from countries around the world. "It's a little surprising that the U.S. hasn't necessarily caught on yet." [2]

The band says the experience gave them the ability to stand up for what they believe in, and strengthened their bond.

### **Colombian police rescue kidnapped 2-month old baby**

Colombian authorities rescued a 2-month-old baby, who was kidnapped by a woman on Monday in Bogotá, in Armenia on Thursday night, September 14.

The baby girl, Maribel Muñoz, was taken by a woman who told her parents, Zenaida Muñoz and Henry López Romero that she belonged to an NGO and could get medical care for for the girl inside Hotel Tequendama. The parents, who are displaced people, went to Caracol TV network in order to report the kidnapping.

Surveillance recordings from the hotel and the city's bus terminal helped with the search. The woman, described as in her late twenties, of height 1.65 m, and having black hair and almond-shaped eyes, left the hotel with two men and went to the local bus terminal. On Thursday, a taxi driver told the media that the day before, he had driven a woman with those features to Cedritos, a neighbourhood in northeast Bogotá.

Finally, on Thursday night, the

kidnapper, Esmeralda Echeverri Castaño, was taken into custody in Cali. She confessed that she had abandoned the baby in a hotel in Armenia, where Maribel was finally found and moved to a hospital. The doctors found the baby to be in good health.

Maribel's parents, who live in a modest house in Usme, south Bogotá, recognized the baby on Friday early morning, thanks to a digital picture sent from Armenia to the police in Bogotá. The child was returned to her parents at 11:30 a.m. (16:30 UTC) on Friday.

### **Microsoft threatens European Vista release delays due EC monopoly regulations**

Microsoft has warned that it may delay Vista, the next release of Windows, in Europe unless it receives clear guidance from the European Commission (EC) about its antitrust requirements for the operating system. Microsoft says it has received numerous requests from its partners seeking assurance about the regulatory status of Vista in Europe.

Microsoft has also claimed that the EC may require that some security features be removed from Vista, possibly referring to internal firewall changes in Vista. The EC had expressed concern that the firewall changes might lock out third party security companies & decrease security by creating a more homogeneous computing environment.

The EC denies any responsibility for a potential shipment delay of Vista, stating that the onus is upon Microsoft to comply with the competition laws of Europe and not for the EC to tell Microsoft how to design Vista.

### **Child abuse case in West Virginia ends in jail time**

A 35-year old woman, Venus Critchfield of Philipippi, West Virginia, United States was convicted of child abuse and sentenced to two to six years in prison.

Critchfield was accused of beating her stepchildren with boards, and using hooks and ropes to secure them and force them to stand for long periods of time. Critchfield also forced the children to continuously eat food and drink, and then eat their own vomit. Her stepson, now aged 17, described the abuse in court.

Circuit Judge Alan D. Moats called this the worst case he has seen in 30 years. "You have never been a mother. You are the antithesis of everything that is a mother." Moats said in court.

The abuse involved all six of Critchfield's children, however only some were willing to testify against her.

Critchfield pleaded guilty and was convicted of two counts of child abuse, with injury. The charges pertained to abuse committed from January 2001 until January 2002. She was sentenced to the maximum possible term.

State welfare services had removed the children, now 11-16 years old, from the Critchfields' care in previous cases.

Jenning Brian Critchfield, the father, is currently serving a 3-15 year sentence for abuse.

### **Virginia bill proposes castration as treatment option for sex offenders**

Virginia's state crime commission recommended on Wednesday that

more research was needed on a legislative bill that would allow convicted sex offenders to opt out of behavioral treatment centers if they agreed to voluntary castration. The bill, proposed by Emmett W. Hanger Jr. (R – Augusta), was introduced as a cost cutting measure.

Hanger told the crime commission, "... when I proposed this initially, it was part of a list of cost-reduction methods." The Virginia General Assembly delayed a vote on the bill during its last legislative session until the commission could examine it.

Virginia sex offenders considered violent are sometimes released from prison sentences and placed into a mandatory state treatment center. The treatment costs per person are in the range of \$7340 annually.

The Hanger bill (seems he may not be interested in pushing it) would re-open the debate on whether castration, either performed surgically or chemically, is an effective measure for an offender to opt out of treatment. Hanger himself has suggested that he may drop the bill in favour of a much broader measure setting up programs for dangerous sex offenders, in which castration will be one of many options.

The Minnesota House voted overwhelming to approve a measure for longer prison sentences and chemical castration for sex offenders in April of last year. Governor Tim Pawlenty later signed the bill on June 2.

California in 1996, and both Florida and Texas in 1997 passed measures allowing sex offenders to avoid judicial commitments by undergoing castration.

### **Planned shooting thwarted in Wisconsin**

A planned shooting was intercepted by police in Green Bay, Wisconsin. The suspects were arrested on the morning of September 14th at East High School, a day after the shooting at Dawson College. Police raided the suspects' homes and found nine rifles and shotguns, ammunition, several "crudely made" bombs, bomb-making material, camouflage clothing, two-way radios, helmets and gas masks. Nothing was found at the school upon their arrest. There was no timeline to the plan, but police say that an attack was imminent. It has been labeled as "a Columbine waiting to happen".

Police Chief Craig Van Schyndle stated that "From statements that we heard, it gave us great concern that, yes, it was in the very near future something was going to take place". He also revealed that the school resource officer also "learned these two students were obsessed with pain, death, and had suicidal thoughts".

The suspects are currently in custody, and charges such as conspiracy to commit murder and conspiracy to commit arson are pending.

### **Statistics say websites with user-generated content are the fastest growing**

The popularity of Websites that rely on user-generated content has increased dramatically in the United Kingdom, according to new statistics. MySpace and Piczo show the strongest growth in usage year-to-year, respectively up 467% to 5.2 million visitors and 393% to 4 million. Bebo is up 328% to 3.9 million, while Wikipedia saw a 181% increase.

These sites draw more frequent visits than other non-user-generated sites in the UK Top 50, with 4.2 usage-days per month (compared to the 3.5 average). They tend to engage visitors for longer (80 minutes per visitor, compared to the 33-minute average), visitors tend to view more pages per visit (217 pages per visitor, compared to 52-page average).

Because users of these sites visit more frequently, stay longer and view more content, the argument goes that this creates more opportunities for marketers to communicate messages. However, in reality, as the number of pages served becomes very large, it gets more difficult to find sufficient advertising inventory to send with those pages.

No-one yet seems to be making big margins from social networking sites. The cost of operating these sites, it turns out, is sensitive to scale. Users generate a lot of noise in promoting themselves, but there's little evidence that many of them are listening to each other— which severely restricts the site owners' ability to make real advertising revenues.

### **BT Global Services to double US revenues and cut costs**

BT Global Services this week laid out its vision for the next three years: its revenues to double in the USA, Japan, India and China, and £400m of annual savings, achieved through offshoring and slashing its procurement costs. £200m of this will come from a reduction in what it spends on technology from vendors on large systems integration projects.

CEO Andy Green admitted that BT had been slower than rivals such

as IBM and Accenture to ramp up its offshore headcount. But he claimed that BT Global Services is thriving as the fastest-growing division within BT. He said that the division was outperforming its closest rivals, T-Systems, Orange Enterprise and AT&T Enterprise, which had all posted revenue declines for the most recent quarter. He said BT was fast becoming a familiar brand to businessmen in New York, Tokyo, Mumbai and Shanghai.

He disclosed a few revenue figures not revealed before. For the financial year ending March 2006, UK revenues rose just 2% to £5.5bn, while overseas revenues shot up 48% to £3.3bn. And of the £8.8bn total revenue, £1.6bn was captive work for its parent, while of the remaining £7.2bn, 18% came from the UK government sector and 17% from financial services. BT said it still harbours ambitions to conquer America, despite the failure of the 'Concert' partnership with AT&T in the 1990s.

In a separate story, BT announced it has chosen Chinese vendor ZTE to develop a dual-mode handset -- 3G and DAB-IP -- for launch by its BT Movio subsidiary next year. DAB-IP (in other words, IP over the DAB digital radio network) will enable BT Movio to broadcast four TV channels at acceptable quality to the handset. 3G will enable video-on-demand, so that the users can specify what video clips or programmes they wish to watch. UK legislation specifies that no more than 30% of the DAB spectrum can be used for non-radio purposes, so BT is lobbying for more DAB spectrum to be released, to enable higher quality video and/or more TV channels.

### **Today in History**

1787 - The text of the United States Constitution was finalized in Philadelphia.

1809 - The Treaty of Hamina concluded the Finnish War between Russia and Sweden, with Finland becoming an autonomous Grand Duchy under Tsar Alexander I.

1894 - The Imperial Japanese Navy and the Beiyang Fleet of Qing China clashed in the Battle of Yalu River, the largest naval engagement of the First Sino-Japanese War.

1916 - World War I: "The Red Baron", a flying ace of the German Luftstreitkräfte, won his first aerial combat near Cambrai, France.

1978 - President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel signed the Camp David Accords after twelve days of secret negotiations at Camp David.

September 18 is onstitution Day and Citizenship Day in the United States.

### **Quote of the Day**

It is difficult  
to get the news from poems  
yet men die miserably every day  
for lack  
of what is found there.  
~ William Carlos Williams ~

### **Word of the Day**

diphthong; n  
1. (phonetics): A complex vowel sound that begins with the sound of one vowel and ends with the sound of another vowel.

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