WIKINEWS PRINTEDITION

Top Stories

Conservative party wins minority government in Canada

Stephen Harper's Conservatives have won a minority government in Canada with most stations reporting at this time. The Conservatives win ends 12 years of a Liberal government plagued by scandals in it's last months.

Ford Motor Company cutting 30,000 jobs by 2012

A phased-in cut back will eliminate 20 to 25% of the car maker's work force and close production plants in a major restructuring plan.

Featured story

Interview: Danny O'Brien of the Electronic Frontier Foundation

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Danny O'Brien of the Electronic Frontier Foundation answers questions on a variety of topics related to freedom and privacy online. Read our exclusive in-depth interview for more details.

Wikipedia Current Events

• Disney and Pixar Animation Studios will merge in a $7.4 billion (US) deal.

Wikipedia Current Events

•CBS Corporation and Warner Bros. announce they will merge UPN and The WB television networks into a new network called CW effective in the fall of 2006.

•A bomb in the southern Iranian city of Ahvaz kills 6 and injures up to 40. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was due to have visited the city today, however the trip was called off at the last minute. Lebanon's al-Manar television said the president had called off his trip after a security tip-off. Local MP Nezam Molla-Hoveyzeh accused Britain of being behind the attack.

•Outgoing Canadian prime minister Paul Martin announces he will resign as leader of the Liberal Party of Canada.

Montenegro trainwreck kills 44, injures over 100

A passenger train carrying at least 250 people, many of which were children, derailed in Serbia-Montenegro and fell off of a ravine Tuesday afternoon.

Close to 200 have been injured and the death toll has risen to 44. Most of the passengers were schoolchildren who were returning from a ski trip.

"The accident occurred because of a failure of the train's braking system," said Interior Minister Jusuf Kalomperovic.

At about 4PM the four-car train derailed near Bioce, a small villiage nearly fifteen kilometers northeast of Podgorica as it was emerging from a tunnel above the Moraca River.

"The train simply went wild, out of control," said one injured passenger. "I was fine because I was in a back compartment, those in the front got the worst of it."

"It was horrible, I saw many dead and wounded around me," said another passenger from Hungary, Karman Chofu.

"I had fallen asleep when a loud noise woke me," said Stanislava Bukovic, 60, another injured passenger.

Miodrag Djurovic, the head of the main Podgorica hospital, stated that another five passengers had died overnight. Djurovic also said at least 198 people, 90 of them children, have been treated at the hospital. "The children's hospital admitted 90 children, 34 of them are still there, six have undergone surgery," Djurovic said.

Earlier Deputy Prime Minister Miroslav Ivanisevic told the media that the death toll stood at 30 and the amount injured at 135, but said those figures could rise as rescuers continue to reach victims. Ivanisevic described the wreck "as the worst rail accident in the history of Montenegro," Ivanisevic also said.

President Filip Vujanovic and Prime

Minister, Milo Djukanovic also rushed to the site. "A terrible tragedy happened at Bioce and everything is being done to reduce the number of casualties as much as possible," Vujanovic told reporters.

Because of the accident, Montenegro's transport minister, Andrija Lompar, and National Railways chief Ranko Medenica resigned.

The driver of the train has been arrested because of suspicion of negligence.

The train was heading from the northeastern town of Bijelo Polje to the Montenegrin coastal city of Bar.

Conservative party wins minority government in Canada

Stephen Harper's Conservatives have won a minority government in Canada with most stations reporting at this time. The Conservatives' win ends 12 years of a Liberal government plagued by allegations of scandals in its last months.

Most major Canadian TV networks began to project a Conservative win at approx 3:30am UTC

Below is the current results for polls reporting, which is still subject to frequent change. Please note this includes both officially elected and leading candidates at this time.

This ends an unusually bitter campaign, with the Conservative and Liberals both launching harsh attack commercials against each other.

In response to the defeat, former prime minister Paul Martin has

stepped down as leader of the Liberal party.

This early election stemmed from the ruling Liberal Party government's loss in a motion of no confidence. The Liberal government has faced strong opposition from the NDP, Conservatives and Bloc Québécois as a result of an embarrassing sponsorship

Bloc Québécois	51
Conservative	124
Green	-
Liberal	103
New Democratic	29
Independent	1

51	124	-	103	29	1

BC
In the Vancouver Island North riding, incumbent John Duncan has been defeated by NDP member and now first time MP Catherine Bell. In the previous 2004 election Bell lost by a mere 483 votes to Duncan. This could be seen as quite an upset to Duncan, who has been in power in this riding for several years and was likely to be in Stephen Harper's cabinet as he was part of Harpers shadow cabinet during the Conservatives time as opposition. Bell won this election by just 1.11%.

Australian Prime Minister announces results of reshuffle

The Australian Prime Minister John Howard announced the results of an earlier anticipated reshuffle of the Government cabinet.

Brendan Nelson, previously of the Education portfolio, who introduced the controversial Voluntary Student Unionism legislation late 2005, has been promoted to the Defence portfolio. Malcolm Turnbull, who had been in the media several times in 2005

regarding tax law, is now a parliamentary secretary, as is Andrew Robb.

The Treasurer Peter Costello, Foreign Affairs minister Alexander Downer, and Health minister Tony Abbott remain unchanged. With former Nationals senator Julian McGauran's defection to the Liberal Party, Nationals Veterans Affairs minister De-Anne Kelly has lost her place, in reflection of the new Coalition numbers, with Bruce Billson taking up the job.

The Opposition has commented on the reshuffle, with Opposition Leader Kim Beazley stating that the Cabinet consists of "old faces" from the "uninspired to the incompetent".

No jail for army interrogator over death of Iraqi general

Chief Warrant Officer Lewis E. Welshofer Jr. of the U.S. Army's 3d Cavalry Regiment will not have to serve any jail time for his involvement in the death of Iraqi Maj. Gen. Abed Hamed Mowhoush during an interrogation. The Iraqi general died after Welshofer shoved the general head-first into a sleeping bag, sat on him and occasionally covered the generals mouth with his hands.

On Saturday, a jury consisting of six military officers acquitted him of murder and assault charges, but found him guilty of negligent homicide and negligent dereliction of duty, charges that carry a combined maximum sentence of 3 years and 3 months. On Monday the military jurors handed down the verdict involving no prison time but imposed a $6000 fine and restricted his movements between work, worship and his barracks for 60 days.

This sentence stands in stark

contrast to that of lower ranking army personal convicted for mistreatment of detainees at the Abu-Ghraib prison. Although none of the victims considered in the Abu-Ghraib cases died, the sentences handed down were significantly harsher, with former corporal Charles A. Graner Jr. serving 10 years in federal prison, former staff sergeant Ivan L. "Chip" Frederick II was serving 8 1/2 years and former private first class Lynndie R. England serving three years.

Before taking effect, the sentence must be approved by Maj. Gen. Robert W. Mixon, who cannot order a harsher sentence but may reduce it or set it aside entirely.

Julian McGauran defects from Australian National Party
Australian National Party senator Julian McGauran left the party in order to join the Australian Liberal Party. McGauran has made comments to the effect of stating that the Liberals have the best chance of representing regional Australia.

The Prime Minister John Howard has said that McGauran was not "poached", over suspicions in relation to an upcoming frontbench reshuffle, and the Federal Treasurer Peter Costello welcomed McGauran's defection, with suspicion he may have orchestrated the move in order to bolster his leadership prospects.

Many Nationals felt hurt; Victorian Nationals leader Peter Ryan called his move the "ultimate act of treachery".

NASA postpones Stardust mission briefing, no revised date as of yet
NASA cancelled a media briefing on its Stardust mission, expected

to provide an update about analysis of both the "Comet Wild 2" particles and interstellar particles gathered during the nearly seven year mission. In "MEDIA ADVISORY: M06-016," issued earlier today, the space agency announced postponement of the briefing, originally scheduled for Tuesday, January 24, 1 p.m. EST. No announcement has been made about when the briefing will be re-scheduled. NASA's stated reason for delay was to, "allow the Stardust science team additional time to assess and distribute cometary samples."

U.S. army interrogator convicted in Iraqi general's death

A U.S. military court found Army chief warrant officer Lewis Welshofer guilty of negligent homicide in the death of Iraqi Maj. Gen. Abed Hamed Mowhoush during an interrogation in al-Qaim in Iraq, near the Syrian border, in November 2003.

The Iraqi general died after Welshofer shoved the general head-first into a sleeping bag, sat on him and occasionally covered the generals mouth with his hands. Welshofer's supervisor had approved this technique except that Welshofer did not tell his supervisor that he sat on prisoners.

The prosecution described the techniques Welshofer used to obtain information from Mowhoush as "torture".

The defense argued that Welshofer's interrogation methods were covered by official policy. His unit's commander Captain William Ponce wrote in an email three months before Mowhoush died that there were no rules for

interrogations yet and that "the gloves are coming off, gentlemen ... we want these individuals broken. Casualties are mounting." Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, the commanding officer in Iraq, authorized new interrogation techniques which according to Welshofer included the sleeping bag method.

The jury consisting of six military officers also found Welshofer guilty of negligent dereliction of duty, but acquitted of the more serious murder and assault charges.

Two days before his death, Mowhoush was beaten with rubber hoses, allegedly by CIA subcontractors, in the presence of Welshofer and on the next day Welshofer held Mowhoush while water was poured on this face.

Welshinger testified that he had used the sleeping bag technique a dozen to two dozen times in Iraq.

The sentencing is scheduled for Monday when Welshofer faces a maximum penalty of three years in a military prison. Last year U.S. army reservist Lynndie England was convicted of one count of conspiracy, four counts of maltreating detainees and one count of committing an indecent act and is currently serving her sentence of three years in prison. None of the charges levied against her involved the death of a detainee and her defense also argued that she was acting with consent of superiors.

Interview: Danny O'Brien of the Electronic Frontier Foundation
anuary's second Interview of the Month was with Danny O'Brien of the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) on 23 January in IRC.

The EFF is coming off a series of high-profile successes in their campaigns to educate the public, press, and policy makers regarding online rights in a digital world, and defending those rights in the legislature and the courtroom. Their settlement with Sony/BMG, the amazingly confused MGM v Grokster decision by the Supreme Court of the United States, and the disturbing cases surrounding Diebold have earned the advocacy organization considerable attention.

When asked if the EFF would be interested in a live interview in IRC by Wikinews, the answer was a nearly immediate yes, but just a little after Ricardo Lobo. With two such interesting interview candidates agreeing so quickly, it was hard to say no to either so schedules were juggled to have both. By chance, the timing worked out to have the EFF interview the day before the U.S. Senate schedule hearings concerning the Broadcast flag rule of the FCC, a form of digital rights management which the recording and movie industries have been lobbying hard for - and the EFF has been lobbying hard to prevent.

[Wikinews] I'd like to jump into some direct questions which were suggested by people on the research page. These first ones relate to the US government and online privacy.
Since 9/11 the US administration has been progressively violating privacy standards in online communications, including circumventing its own surveillance laws and developing—and possibly implementing—the Total Information Awareness project. What is EFF's position regarding government monitoring of private communications such e-mail,

instant messaging, and voice over IP?
[Danny O'Brien] Since the very beginning, the EFF has worked hard to keep the traditional laws regarding wiretapping and monitoring away from the Internet, not just because we believe in strong 4th Amendment rights but because technologically, a wiretap on an individual line is miles away from what is needed to do the equivalent on the Internet. That's why, for instance, we fought against CALEA being extended to the Net, and why we're fighting the FCC's extension of it now.
A lot of simple approaches to surveillance that the gov't would like to take are far from reasonable, to use the language of the 4th amendment.
I should say that I'm using American examples here, but we're obviously concerned more generally
[Wikinews] A related question - Will EFF be involved in cases, even as amicus, such as the cases filed by ACLU Detroit and the Center for Constitutional Rights New York, which allege the National Security Agency violated US law prohibiting wiretaps without a warrant?
[Danny O'Brien] We're currently looking into every possible avenue. One of the difficulties is trying to ascertain exactly what the government program involved. The EFF has a battery of lawyers, with different areas of interest
[Wikinews] Is this in the same vein as the recent requests for google to poney up it's search database?
[Danny O'Brien] No, that's a great question. The two issues are very different, but I think speak to the problems that the Internet is now being seen as a resource for government surveillance and research, which we think that all Net companies have to become

aware of. There's a real danger in simply logging everything: you end up risking being a tool for the invasion of your own customer's privacy.
[Wikinews] Google alone of the largest search engines refused the Justice Department's demands to turn over user data. The EFF is on record as criticizing Google's privacy policy. How does the EFF feel about that privacy policy now? What does EFF feel about the other search engine's behaviour—did they comply with their own privacy policies? Does this incident reflect the strength or weakness of corporate privacy policies online?
[Danny O'Brien] Privacy policies largely extend at the moment to merely the descriptions of what information is stored. We've long warned against companies collecting large amounts of data about their customers, and doing nothing to anonymise or aggregate it. We think that companies are storing up trouble for themselves this way.
[Wikinews] Does the EFF have any material or programs that seek to educate employeers and companies on the advantages of privacy?
[Danny O'Brien] We do -- hold on, I should be handing out more URLs http://www.eff.org/osp/ is our guide to "online service providers" for the best practicies in logging data. I'm also speaking at the MySQL conference later this year on what *not* to include in your schema. It's an interesting area, because it's one where coders have a degree of power over what can be done. Personally, I'd like to see a great deal more knowledge about how to aggregate and anonymise data being spread among the community. I'm constantly recommending the book Translucent Databases, which covers this very nicely. Also, the

OSS source would do a great service by setting reasonable defaults for software logging behaviours. The trouble is, and I think we all fall into this trap; we assume the more logging the better. How many of us are casually logging this, for instance?

[Wikinews] I'd like to talk about the Sony BMG case for a bit, if that's okay. First, congratulations to EFF in regard to some of the successes in the Sony BMG case. There are some questions, clarifications about the case, however. The settlement appears to cover the XCP and SunComm software delivered on CDs. What about OpenMG XCP, DRM used by Sony BMG's SonicStage software for Sony Connect?

[Danny O'Brien] Okay, this is where I have to say that I'm a *bit* limited in what I can say. Ah, if only out of blind ignorance in this particular case.

[Wikinews] Do you know if the OpenMG XCP software is mentioned at all in the agreement?

[Danny O'Brien] I don't know about OpenMG: we joined the case representing XCP and SunComm users, so I don't think that was covered. But watch me shine the giant neon IANAL sign above me. If you like, I can ask after the interview, and we can add that to the results.

[Wikinews] I'd appreciate that. Can you disclose the terms of the settlement regarding future use of software DRM measures? Have they promised not to alter users machines in the future?

[Danny O'Brien] Again, it's always dangerous to paraphrase legal documents. Ah, we have an FAQ that covers this. Thank goodness: http://www.eff.org/IP/DRM/Sony-BMG/settlement_faq.php

[Wikinews] This case also has some connection to copyright infringement

the XCP software included code taken from the VLC media player software, which is released under the GPL. Is EFF involved in any cases regarding this?

[Danny O'Brien] No we didn't cover this. We don't have standing to take on the copyright issue - i.e. we would have to represent a copyright holder.

[Wikinews] Would EFF be involved in such a case if asked?

[Danny O'Brien] It'd be an interesting case, but we try to distribute these cases to where the expertise lies. During the Sony BMG case, we spoke to groups like the FSF and the Software Freedom Law Center. Generally speaking, they're the people who would be best placed to investigate cases like this.

It's worth saying that we're really pleased that there's now a whole constellation of great organisations that we work with. FSF, the Berkman Center, Public Knowledge in D.C., the list goes on.

[Wikinews] The Sony BMG case is a content producer attempting to enforce DRM on their clients. The US FCC is trying to do the same thing on the hardware of US citizens with the Broadcast Flag. I know the EFF is involved in the lobbying on this, but I have questions which lead into this. This is a hardware issue. Does it matter on the internet?

[Danny O'Brien] Yes, for a number of reasons.

The point about the broadcast and audio flags is that they set up a kind of ghetto for content. The whole point of both is to *prevent* distribution onto the Internet. But in order to do that, you need to create a hardware world which is fenced off from not just the Net, but from user modification, and open source development.

This ghetto has to be created in

every audio-visual device, by government mandate. So that affects the Net a couple of ways. Firstly, you essentially curtail the Net's use. But secondly, these flags are easily (though illegally) circumventable, so they generally prompt even more draconian laws (which are just as easily circumventable.)

One of our biggest problems with the flags is they cross a Rubicon. They create a government technological mandate in user tech. Once you start down that path—especially when you discover your initial mandate doesn't actually work—you just ask for more and more control.

[Wikinews] Isn't this already the case, considering the HDTV standard and others? Isn't standards an element of the FCCs mandate?

[Danny O'Brien] Standards for broadcast and reception, but not standards for what you do *after* you receive something. Remember the FCC's primary job is to prevent interference, and to manage the commons of the public airwaves. It's a huge overreach for it to take over what you do with what comes from over those airwaves.

[Wikinews] Because this is a rule, not a law, how does the EFF plan to approach it in the US Congress?

[Danny O'Brien] Well, the initial regulation was thrown out by the courts, who agreed with us that this was agency overreach. So what we've seen now is groups like the MPAA and RIAA attempt to extend the FCC's powers by law. For all of last year, they attempted to do that by -- well, for want of a better word, sneakily attaching the necessary language to other bills. As you say, it can potentially be a very small amendment, so I suppose they felt that they could do this. Everyone fought an incredibly effective campaign to

prevent this. And a lot of that had to do with the Net—we'd hear from the Hill of a lobbyist attempt to include the regulation, and we'd be able to organise calls and letters from constituents very quickly.

Most politicians, strangely enough, don't like it when something is sneaked past them. And we managed to alert a lot of them to arguments they weren't hearing from broadcasting lobbyists.

Now, we're seeing a second stage. Which is Hollywood coming out into the open, and presenting the flags openly. That stage begins tomorrow, with Senate hearings on the topic.

[Wikinews] The Senate will begin hearings on this rule tomorrow. What does EFF expect to happen during this legislative process? How might this affect online communities? to get specific and personal, what does it mean to Wikinews readers and contributors?

[Danny O'Brien] If the law passes, it'll have dramatic effects. Particularly to wikinew's future, actually: I think we can all foresee a time when Wikinews would take fair use samples of the news and public affairs, both audio and visual. With a broadcast or audio flag in place, that usage - while legal - would effectively disappear or at least be much much harder. More generally, you'll see advancement in tech frozen in a lot of areas, the pulling away of open source development in anything that was connected to HD TV or digital radio. The biggest problem here is that technology like the flag gives the entertainment industry a stick to hit the technology industry. Before the broadcast flag was even introduced, hollywood was lining up objections to technology like Tivo-To-Go.

[Wikinews] I understand that would be the case in the USA, but could you explain how this might affect people in the EU? or anywhere outside the USA?

[Danny O'Brien] Sure, one of the areas that we spend a lot of time with these days—we have two staff working full time on international issues—is what's called policy laundering. So for instance, the worst provisions of the DMCA have generally been introduced into law in countries like Australia by their inclusion in bilateral Free Trade Agreements. Already, Hollywood representatives have been working in Europe and elsewhere to introduce the equivalent of the broadcast flag there. The rule is that if you can introduce it in one country, that makes it a lot easier to export it elsewhere.

[Danny O'Brien] Copyright extension is a great example of this. In that, the last US copyright extension was introduced to track Europe, and now Europe is being encouraged to match its copyright with the US. We're already seeing that with copy control mandates like the flag.

[Wikinews] The Broadcast flag is a form of Digital Rights Management, in this case implemented by the US FCC. There are other DRM issues to talk about. In the French Parliament the DADVSI law, which relates to the implementation of the 2001 European Directive on Copyright in France, is under active consideration. Has the EFF had the opportunity to consider this law, and what is the opinion if so?

[Danny O'Brien] Actually, I was just talking to Submarine about this before the interview started. We're keeping as close an eye on this as we can. It's a good example of the ratchet problem as it's an implementation of the EUCD.

[Wikinews] Canada and Belgium apply heavy taxes on copying medium, and the revenues from these taxes are used to support creative artists and developers, as an alternative to supporting DRM. What does EFF feel about such a method to control fair use/fair dealing?

[Danny O'Brien] Actually, we prefer a system of voluntary licensing schemes over either of these approaches.

http://www.eff.org/share/collective_lic_wp.php

[Wikinews] There are efforts under way to develop an open standard DRM, such as a project by Sun Microsystems which is relatively fair to users. Would EFF support an open standard/open source DRM, or is the entire concept of DRM considered unacceptable in any form?

[Danny O'Brien] Our take on Sun's DRM:

http://www.eff.org/news/archives/2005_08.php#003929

Essentially, our disagreement isn't with DRm per se: it's DRM backed up by the DMCA's anti-circumvention laws. If users had the right to circumvent DRm to exercise their fair use rights, we think the market would quickly sort out what controls on media use were acceptable and what were not.

[Wikinews] A follow-on question from the French one does eff plan to set up some chapters in Europe ?

[Danny O'Brien] France like many countries, has a great core of activists and advocates already. We'd be delighted to help them in any way we can.

[Wikinews] A follow-on question regarding the Sony BMG case Does EFF have a response to the Register article

http://www.theregister.co.uk/2005/12/06/eff_needs_to_die/

[Danny O'Brien] Sigh. I wondered

if this would turn up. It's a really odd article, given that it includes a bunch of cases that aren't ours, ones that we didn't lose, and other oddities. I think we'd rather let the facts speak for themselves. Here's a list of our [http://www.eff.org/legal/victories/ victories]. There's a longer list at the wikipedia entry.
[Wikinews] Are there any questions I should have asked you, which I did not?
[Danny O'Brien] Hahah! No, but I'm happy to take additional questions. I'm actually trying to think of some of the harder questions.
[Wikinews] Well, I think I'll ask MrM to unmoderate now, and let everyone mob you.
[MrMiscellanious] :) Alright, here we go...

MrMiscellanious made this room no longer moderated for normal users.
[Danny O'Brien] I guess the question we often get asked is "Why aren't you doing something about X?" where X is a matter that really is important—the simple answer to that is that we have limited resources. Which is why I'm really happy to see lots of other organisations spring up.
[Question] Does EFF support TOR, financially or otherwise, anymore?
[Danny O'Brien] We host Tor's website, but direct funding was for last year. Actually, the Tor questions really are so frequentlyl asked that they're best answered on Tor's FAQ (including the legal FAQ we wrote for them.) http://tor.eff.org/faq.html.en
[Question] en.Wikipedia prevents TOR endpoints from editing on the site; does EFF consider such class-blocking an acceptable response to behavior, or is it generally inappropriate?
[Danny O'Brien] We're disappointed. We hope there's a

way of providing a technical solution that would work to support Tor's aims, and would be practical for Wikipedia. If we can work as an intermediary in that discussion, we'd be happy to.
[Question] European Organisations which have similar goals like the EFF were not succesful in preventing Telecommunications data retention. What conclusions does the EFF draw for their own campaigns?
[Danny O'Brien] I have a long answer to that, with my EFF hat off.
Okay, so the reason I'll take my EFF hat off to answer your question, is because I'm also involved in ORG which is one of those organisations in Europe. The conclusion is that advocacy needs resources. One of the strengths of EFF and other US advocacy groups is they are permanent, with a paid staff. http://openrightsgroup.org I think that now there are sites like http://www.pledgebank.com around, and facts like the wikipedia funding drive show that we're getting to the point where we can turn volunteer organisations into groups that have that flexibility, plus financial resources. Which means you get to the situation where the group of volunteers who formed ORG can now work on projects like submitting to UK parliamentary inquiries: http://www.openrightsgroup.org/orgwiki/index.php/APIG_DRM_Public_Inquiry
There are fantastic groups in Europe, like EDRI and FFII and I think the time is now right for those groups to be given more resources by everyone. And I speak as someone who traditionally comes out in hives when money is mentioned. It's a big leap, but I think it's one we all have to work at getting right. Give

to them, at exactly the same time as you join the EFF: http://www.eff.org/support/

Danny O'Brien puts EFF hat back on.
[Question] "Danny O'Brien "once successfully lobbied a cockney London pub to join Richard M. Stallman in a spontaneous demonstration of Bulgarian folk dance." Can you give details?"
[Danny O'Brien] RMS is a great fan of folk-dancing, and was teaching me and some friends the dance moves to the Free Software Song in a pub in Shoreditch. Maybe it was the alcohol, all the alledgedly viral nature of the GPL, but by the end, we had most of the pub doing them. He loves it, although recently I believe he's hurt his leg and can't do it so much any more
[Question] Wikipedia was earlier attacked by a group, which has launched a website, claiming that Wikipedia should be upheld by law to have 100% factuality in their website (relating to an earlier case where a bogus biography was posted to Wikipedia). What is the EFF's stance on the issue?
[Danny O'Brien] I'm not sure of the site that you refer to, but obviously we'd support Wikipedia on this matter. We don't see any problem with Wikipedia's process.

[Question] There is an article on de.wikipedia (German) about the hacker "Tron". His full offline name is included in the article. A German court has issued an injunction preventing the Wikipedia.de website (the website of the German Wikimedia Foundation) from linking to the de.wikipedia site, which is outside the jurisdiction of that court. What does EFF think about such extranational effects of local laws? Does a person's name, especially a figure as well known as Tron,

deserve special privacy? The order was obtained based on a proposal by the deceased hacker's family. And it should be pointed out that the hacker's real name was known for a long time.

[Danny O'Brien] It's a good question: honestly, it depends on the law, and the practicality of the law. I can't speak to the case, particularly as the last i heard, the facts weren't clear. In this case, it's not the territoriality of the law that's of concern, it's whether anyone should be forbidden from linking to a resource.

Exclusive: David Anderson talks about the Stardust@home project

Following the return of the Stardust space capsule from its encounter with the Comet Wild 2, NASA scientists have come up with a novel approach to dealing with the samples of "interstellar dust" that have been collected, they want help from the public.

The Stardust spacecraft carried an aerogel-based dust collector, which was exposed to space in varying orientations during different phases of the mission.

Only one side of the collector was exposed towards the stream of particles coming off the Comet Wild 2 during the encounter in 2004, while the other side was used to collect interstellar dust at an earlier point in the spacecraft's journey.

Although scientists have seen the particles captured from comet Wild 2 when they examined the aerogel, they have not examined any of the particles expected on the other side of the collector due to their smallness. They will be examined after they are found with the help of Stardust@home. It is believed that on the order of

50 interstellar dust particles impacted the aerogel, each now resting inside a tiny crater.

Stardust traveled nearly three billion miles and its mission lasted seven years. At times it was traveling at 8 miles a second. Thats fast enough to go from San Francisco to Los Angeles in one minute.

Stardust set a new all-time record for being the fastest spacecraft to return to Earth, breaking the previous record set in May of 1969 during the return of the Apollo X(10) command module. Don Brownlee of the University of Washington, Seattle said "our spacecraft has traveled further than anything from Earth ever has – and came back. We went half-way to Jupiter to meet the comet and collect samples from it. But the comet actually came in from the outer edge of the solar system, out beyond the orbit of Neptune, out by Pluto."

In a move similar to some distributed computing projects, the analysis work for the project will be spread among volunteers on the Internet, who are being asked to participate in this scientific undertaking.

Wikinews reporter Jason Safoutin investigated the Stardust@home project, and discussed its goals with one of its founders. Via email, he interviewed David P. Anderson, a founder of the SETI@home project, and one of the creators of the Virtual Microscope which will be used to search for captured particles from interstellar space.

I was wondering If I could get some questions answered or if you could give me some "insider" info for the project. I am aware that you are taking place in the

development of the VM (Virtual Microscope)...Could I know more about that?

The 'virtual microscope' lets you scan through a set of images as if you were turning the focus knob on a microscope. The images are fairly large (about 100 KB each) so it's important to pre-load the images. While you're looking through one set of images, the VM is busy downloading the JPEG files for the next set.

At first we thought we'd have to do this with a Java applet or Flash program - something tricky and complicated. My contribution was to point out that it could be done fairly easily using Javascript, and I wrote a prototype of this.

Will this project use the BOINC Platform/Program?
No. We thought about using some parts of BOINC (like the database and web pages for creating "accounts") but it was easier just to do this from scratch.

How long will the project take?
It depends how many volunteers participate, and how fast they look at the 'focus movies'. It will probably be just a month or two.

Anyone can join but they have to take a test before they can participate. What will the test include?
Looking at some focus movies and deciding whether they contain a dust particle. Participants see a lot of training examples before they take the test. It's easy, not like a test in school.

How many will be allowed to participate?
No limit as of now.

When will the project start?
I think in about 2 months. It will take that long to transport the

aerogel to the laboratory, and photograph it with the microscope. The software is ready to go.

Thank you for your time David. And great work on the upcoming project and SETI@home.

Today in History

1327 - Teenaged Edward III was crowned King of England, but the country was ruled by his mother Queen Isabella and her lover Roger Mortimer.

1554 - Portuguese Jesuit priests José de Anchieta and Manoel da Nóbrega established a missionary in São Paulo dos Campos de Piratininga, a village which grew to become the presentday São Paulo, Brazil.

1924 - The first Winter Olympic Games opened at the foot of Mont Blanc in Chamonix, France.

1971 - General Idi Amin seized power in Uganda from Milton Obote, beginning eight years of military rule.

2004 - Mars Exploration Rover Opportunity landed on Mars and rolled into Eagle crater, a small crater on the Meridiani Planum.

January 25 is Burns Night in Scotland

Quote of the Day

Musick has Charms to sooth a savage Breast,To soften Rocks, or bend a knotted Oak.~ William Congreve ~