



Top Stories

Iran says it's ready for nuclear standoff

Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has stated that his country is prepared to have a nuclear standoff with the United States.

Report says US military gear sold to Iran and China

Fighter jet parts and other U.S. military gear that were to be sold to Iran and China have been traced back to the Pentagon.

Featured story

EU report in favor of adopting open source software

A EU Commission funded research studied costs and benefits of adopting open source software, such as Linux or OpenOffice.org instead of proprietary software such as Microsoft Windows or Microsoft Office. The study concluded that "in almost all the cases, a transition toward open source reports of savings on the long term – costs of ownership of the software products".

Wikipedia Current Events

- The longest reigning minister-president in 200 years in Bavaria, Edmund Stoiber, quits his position as minister-president and chairman of the CSU. Stoiber held the first position from 1993 and the second position from 1999.
- Al Arabiyah reports that a fire at

Wikipedia Current Events

- Kuwait's Shuaiba Port has stopped oil exports and refining in that country.
- French newspaper Le Monde reports that Spanish cyclist Óscar Pereiro has produced two positive urine samples for salbutamol during the 2006 Tour de France. Pereiro had finished second in the Tour. The contested winner, Floyd Landis, had tested positive for testosterone during the Tour.
- Two killed in Jumeirah Lake Towers fire in Dubai.
- The European windstorm Kyrill sweeps across Great Britain, the Netherlands and Germany, killing at least nine in Britain and three in the Netherlands. A container ship has to be abandoned in the English channel because of the wind. British and French rescue services pick up 26 crew members.
- Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki suggests that if the United States better armed the Iraqi armed forces, they would be able to dramatically draw back U.S. troops "in three to six months".
- Israel transfers to the Palestinian the \$100 million tax revenues withheld since the Hamas won the election last year.
- 65 deaths have been attributed to blizzards, sleet and freezing rain since Friday (January 12) in nine U.S. states, including 23 in Oklahoma and 10 in Texas.
- Interstate 10 in Texas and Interstate 5 north of Los Angeles,

Wikipedia Current Events

- California, remain closed due to snow and ice.
- California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger asks for his state to be declared a federal disaster area after agricultural damage is estimated over \$1 billion USD.
- Snow is recorded at Los Angeles International Airport for the first time since 1962.

Report says US military gear sold to Iran and China

Fighter jet parts and other U.S. military gear that were to be sold to Iran and China have been traced back to the Pentagon. The gear was not sold directly to these countries, but rather it was obtained by middlemen who the sold it again.

In one case, federal investigators said that a Pakistani middleman purchased arms from the Defense Department's surplus auction. The arms purchased were Chinook helicopter engine parts, which the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency said did successfully make it to Iran.

In a second case, Tomcat parts were bought from the Defense Department's surplus division. Custom agents confiscated and returned the parts, but later found out that the Defense Department had resold the parts to another buyer suspected of being a broker for Iran. Except for the US, which recently retired its Tomcat air fleet,

Iran is the only other country flying Tomcats.

In 2005 alone, the profits made from the Pentagon's public surplus sales were \$57 million.

The Pentagon has had previous incidents in the past. In 2003, a Camden, New Jersey company, State Metal Industries, was convicted for selling AIM-7 Sparrow missile guidance parts, which it had bought from the Defense Department's surplus auctions, to an entity partially owned by the Chinese government.

Apple concerned with iPhone icons' alleged misuse

Apple's lawyers are reportedly pursuing legal action against persons whom they claim are wrongfully using icons, interfaces, and other copyright- or patent-protected materials from its new iPhone on other smart phones, which may have features similar to the iPhone's. Apple has also reportedly contacted at least one blogger who posted screenshots of iPhone icons with "cease and desist" requests, although it should be noted that in the one reported case referenced below, the blogger had also posted a download link to an interface containing features allegedly appropriated from the iPhone. Apple's new gadget was demonstrated at Macworld 2007.

Protecting intellectual property can involve a balance between (among other things) allowing some unauthorized use of such material in order to obtain "free promotion" of a company or product, and preventing competitors from "piggybacking" upon original research or upon an established reputation.

Sex industry plans live sex-on-demand video for hotels

Sex industry producers think over a new service: on-demand live sex video that can be watched from a hotel room. Will this service be popular? Will large hotel chains go along? These and some other issues were talked about during panel discussion at annual Las Vegas, Nevada trade show for sex entertainment industry producers, marketers and payment processors Internext.

There were two opinions on this issue. Gregory Clayman, the owner of the live-action company Video Secrets expressed confidence that in the nearest future sex industry would be selling images of couples making love live over the hotel's entertainment systems.

At the same time Anne Taulane, managing editor of Lodging magazine, said she doubted whether major hotel chains would be enthusiastic about this idea as she was convinced that on-demand sex video was more available to the mainstream than viewing live sex performers over hotel's entertainment system.

The panelists praised Mastercard and Visa programs which helped to reduce chargebacks or refusals to pay for ordered sex video and debated whether requiring a credit card would prevent minors from viewing sexually explicit materials in the Internet. As the result they came to the conclusion that the government must intervene to cope with these problems.

Bravitude and Chair of the Wikimedia Foundation on the main French TV network

The newly elected Chair of the Wikimedia Foundation scheduled talk on the main French TV was met with questions about a last

minute deletion of the entry for bravitude, (a neologism used by Ségolène Royal, the French socialist presidential candidate and commonly heard in the French media). It was deleted from the French version of Wikipedia not long prior to the televised appearance by Devouard. The decision to delete the entry apparently perplexed the anchor commentator, who judged the term was currently noteworthy and felt his view was shared by many Frenchmen today.

Chair Nibart-Devouard then explained that since Wikipedia is written collaboratively by volunteers, its articles can be and are edited by almost anyone with access to the Web site. Therefore any article, including one on bravitude, can be added to this Wiki encyclopedia... but the article can be modified or even deleted if the verification process leads to a consensus to do so.

One might speculate whether the French media interest in the French Wikipedia's deletion of the term bravitude will result in sufficient discussion to warrant this neologism being restored to the French Wikipedia.

Israeli head of military resigns

The head of the Israel Defense Forces, Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz resigned on Tuesday January 16, 2007 after an internal review criticized his military's leadership during the war in Lebanon last summer.

Halutz sent his resignation letter to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, which according to Israeli Army Radio said, "For me, the concept of responsibility is everything."

Halutz has also been facing criticism after it was disclosed that

he sold a portion of his stock portfolio hours after the Lebanon fighting began on July 12, 2006.

New Zealanders being urged to become condom testers

Condom manufacturer Durex is urging New Zealanders to sign up online to become one of 100 condom testers. Already 3,000 New Zealanders, both men and women, have applied to become condom testers, according to Durex.

Durex is recruiting the New Zealanders to test a new line of latex-free condoms.

Durex claims it is using New Zealanders to test the new condoms because, according to the company's surveys, New Zealanders are adventurous in the bedroom. Victoria Potter, spokeswoman for Durex, said: "The overwhelming response to date from Kiwis has certainly proven this."

The 100 needed people for their tests will be selected in two weeks time randomly, the final date for sending in applications is January 31, 2007.

The condom being tested is called "Durex Avanti Ultima" and is free of latex. Instead of latex, it is made of polyisoprene, the first condom to use it. Ms Potter said the new condom is "exceptionally" soft and will provide maximum comfort. The new condom will appeal to those who are allergic to latex.

Ms Potter said: "By becoming a Durex Condom Tester, Kiwis have the opportunity to get steamy in the bedroom and try out another world-leading Durex condom, all in the aid of research."

New Zealand's NCEA results due today onwards

New Zealand's NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement) results for each student will start arriving today onwards. The results will be posted online today and have been sent out sooner than in previous years.

Around 136,000 students took part in the 2006 external exams and NZQA (New Zealand Qualifications Authority) say 85% of them will receive their results in today's, Wednesday, mail. Student's living in rural areas will receive their results on Friday. Scholarship results will be sent out sometime mid February.

Bali Haque said that it was a huge logistical operation to get all the results out but said that it went smoothly.

Each student already knows their results for their internal results but are awaiting their grades (not achieved, achieved, merit or, excellence) of their external end-of-year exams.

NZQA said that the marking of over a million NCEA papers and scholarship papers went smoothly despite having a mistake in a level two mathematics paper. However NZQA says no students will be affected by the mistake.

After results have been received, students will then receive their answer booklets.

Canadian CEO surrenders to police

Adam Spencer, 26-years-old, and former (CEO) of Emexis Integrated Solutions Inc. turned himself in yesterday morning. His family and his lawyer were with him.

This came after a Canada-wide

police search was started on January 12, 2007. The Oakville, Ontario man disappeared last year after asking for money from Canadian investors to help his company Emexis go public. However, Spencer did not take Emexis public as promised.

Eighty-nine investors, who, at the time, believed Spencer, have come forward to police.

"The long and the short of it is that he did not meet his obligations in terms of what he promised his investors," Mr. Peter Leupen, one of the investors who helped Spencer, said. "He promised us a dividend on an initial investment and that never happened."

"He's genuinely dishonest, I think he's immature and putting the best gloss on it, he let the money he was collecting go to his head. He was spending it like a drunken sailor on boats, houses, race cars, everything but what he was supposed to be spending it on," Mr. Symon Zucker, a Toronto lawyer who the investors sought help from.

Spencer was last seen before Christmas and recently returned to Canada. Detective Jeff Thompson said Spencer was in Chicago, Illinois for the weekend.

"It appears that he was not in any hurry to face the music," said Thompson.

Spencer will go to a Toronto court on Monday.

Clashes in central Bolivian city kills two

Fighting broke out between rioters and civil defense groups in the central Bolivian city of Cochabamba on Thursday, January 11 leaving 2 dead and 240 injured.

Coca farmers backing the government of president Evo Morales attacked government buildings and set fire to part of the local government offices in Cochabamba.

The rioters were demanding the resignation of the state governor - a critic of president Morales who supported a move to give Bolivia's states greater autonomy.

Opposition political parties have demanded an investigation into allegations that president Morales' ally, senator Leonilda Zurita, delivered supplies to the demonstrators who have laid siege to the local government building.

Victoria power grid collapses due to spot fires

Large parts of Victoria were hit with power outages after bushfires near Benalla knocked out power transmission lines connecting the state to the national electricity grid at approximately 4:00 p.m. local time. Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo were all affected.

Paul Price from the national electricity grid supervisor NEMMCO said that today set an all-time record for electricity demand.

Emma Daniell, from the power supplier SP AusNet said the result of the fires "prompted an automatic load reduction system to kick in, reducing power supply to customers". These rolling blackouts are occurring across the surrounding suburbs lasting one hour a time.

The blackout affected about 200,000 homes, 1,200 traffic lights and "mobile base stations". Trains and trams were reduced to a crawl, with buses replacing trains between Essendon and Kensington railway stations, and on the

Werribee loop.

Geelong was the region worst affected, with the entire city losing power from 4 p.m. Power was restored to the central business district area shortly after 5 p.m., however many parts of the city were not restored until 8 p.m.

The Australian Open tennis tournament was not affected.

Today in History

1778 - Captain James Cook discovered the Sandwich Islands, now known as Hawaii.

1871 - King Wilhelm I of Prussia was proclaimed the first Kaiser of the German Empire, a newly unified nation state.

1958 - Willie O'Ree of the Boston Bruins played his first game in the National Hockey League, breaking the color barrier in professional ice hockey.

1977 - The mysterious Legionnaires' disease was found to be caused by a novel bacterium now known as Legionella.

2003 - The Canberra Firestorm: Bushfires burning out of control began blazing through residential areas of Canberra, Australia.

January 18 is Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (1st day)

Quote of the Day

To me, literature is a calling, even a kind of salvation. It connects me with an enterprise that is over 2,000 years old. What do we have from the past? Art and thought. That's what lasts. That's what continues to feed people and give them an idea of something better. A better state of one's feelings or simply the idea of a silence in one's self that allows one to think or to feel. Which to me is the same. ~ Susan Sontag

Word of the Day

it's all Greek to me; idiom
1. I don't understand any of this; this makes no sense.

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