



Top Stories

Wikinews investigates Wikipedia usage by U.S. Senate staff members

Staff members of the offices of United States Senators, using Senate-linked IP addresses, have been editing Wikipedia, according to an investigation conducted by Wikinews contributors. In some cases, they have removed negative facts about Senators from the articles.

Iran demands that IAEA end surveillance of its nuclear program

Shortly after ending its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the government of Iran has now ordered the IAEA to discontinue surveillance of their developing nuclear program.

Featured story

U.S. expels Venezuelan diplomat

Diplomatic staff member from Venezuela given 72 hours to leave the United States after a diplomatic row erupts following the expulsion of a U.S. naval attache in Venezuela for alleged spying.

Wikipedia Current Events

•US forces are searching for the USS Cole attacker dude who escaped from prison last Friday. According to Interpol, an al-Qaida operative who had been sentenced to death for plotting the bombing of the USS Cole in

Wikipedia Current Events

2000 escaped with a group of convicts from their prison last week in SAN'A, Yemen. This is not the first group to have escaped. 10 other chief suspects escaped from custody in Aden during April of 2003

- Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities announces the discovery of an intact pharaonic tomb in the Valley of the Kings – the first to be unearthed since King Tutankhamun's in 1922.
- In Turkey, Istanbul's police chief said a bomb blast at an Internet cafe in the city had wounded 14 people.
- A suicide bombing ripped through a Shiite Muslim procession in northwestern Pakistan, sparking riots during the Muslim sect's most important holiday, called Ashoura. At least 27 people were killed and dozens injured in the violence.
- A large-scale slaughter is planned at a Nigerian farm where thousands of chickens have died from bird flu.
- After a second jury failed to reach a verdict in the Billie-Jo Jenkins murder trial, the prosecution decided not to attempt to retry the accused. Sion Jenkins, Billie-Jo's stepfather was on trial for her murder.
- The Manx Parliament votes to lower the voting age to 16

ESPN trades Al Michaels for "Oswald the Lucky Rabbit"

In an odd move, ESPN's parent company, The Walt Disney Company, traded the contract of NFL play-by-play analyst Al Michaels to NBC Universal in exchange for various sports considerations and Oswald the Lucky Rabbit, a cartoon character Walt Disney created 79 years ago but lost him to Charles B. Mintz when he created his own studio. Oswald is generally understood to be the precursor to Mickey Mouse.

Michaels, 61, will again join John Madden in the analyst booth for NBC's Sunday Night Football coverage beginning in the 2006 season. This follows the announcement the previous day that Joe Theismann, Mike Tirico and Tony Kornheiser would be in the broadcast booth for ESPN Monday Night Football. It was previously believed that Theismann and Michaels would announce Monday Night Football for ESPN.

In addition to Oswald for Disney, ESPN got the following sports rights from NBC Sports: Friday coverage for the Ryder Cup golf tournaments in 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014, and the right to re-air Saturday and Sunday coverage from NBC. Expanded coverage of the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness Stakes from 2006 through 2011. Expanded access to clips of Olympics coverage, beginning with the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino and ending with the 2012 Summer

Olympics in London.
Expanded access to clips of Notre Dame college football games from 2006 through 2011.
Promotion of ESPN Monday Night Football during NBC Sunday Night Football through 2011.

Oswald the Lucky Rabbit was created in 1927 by Walt Disney for Charles B. Mintz, and distributed by Universal Studios. Disney directed 26 Oswald cartoons before a budget dispute with Mintz forced Disney to leave and create his own studio. Mintz, however, owned the rights to Oswald, and kept the character. Oswald soon was bought by Universal, who would continue to create Oswald cartoons on a regular basis until 1938. Most of the succeeding Oswald cartoons were directed by Walter Lantz, who would later become famous for Universal's most well-known cartoon character, Woody Woodpecker. The rights to Oswald traded to Disney include the entire Oswald cartoon library.

700,000 march in Beirut; Hezbollah leader lambasts Bush and Rice

massive demonstration march of over half a million Shiite Muslims heard Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, tell President Bush and his secretary of state, Rice, to "shut up" after they reportedly accused Iran and Syria of fueling protest demonstrations over Muhammad cartoons.

"Defending the prophet should continue all over the world. Let Condoleezza Rice and Bush and all the tyrants shut up. We are an Islamic nation that cannot tolerate, be silent or be lax when they insult our prophet and sanctities. We will uphold the messenger of God not only by our voices but also by our blood,"

Nasrallah told the crowds, estimated to be 700,000 (police said the figure was likely to be even higher).

The Hezbollah leader also told the crowd that protests must continue until laws are passed in Europe banning insults to Muhammad. NATO defence ministers are in Brussels meeting to discuss the controversy's security implications.

Neil Entwistle, suspect in murder of wife and child, arrested in England

Neil Entwistle has been named as a "person of interest" by authorities for the murder of his wife Rachel and nine-month old baby daughter Lillian in their Hopkinton, Massachusetts home. Both were shot to death and found under a pile of blankets in the bedroom. The family had just moved into the home and had only been living there for ten days. Entwistle has not been in the United States since the murders.

However; it has been confirmed that Entwistle has been arrested in England on two counts of murder, and one count of illegal possession of a firearm and ammunition. Until today he has not been a suspect.

"Entwistle was arrested by British authorities and faces murder charges," said Emily LaGrassa, spokeswoman for the Middlesex District Attorney's office. "He is in police custody in England at this time." Entwistle was arrested at around noon (7 a.m. ET).

A statement was released by the family of Rachel Entwistle saying, "The family is deeply saddened at the arrest of Neil Entwistle for the murders of Rachel and Lillian. We are heartbroken at the loss - to understand how this happened."

District Attorney Martha Coakley, of Middlesex County, MA, said that Entwistle could have been planning a murder-suicide, but abandoned the suicide part of the plot after carrying out the murders.

"On Thursday night, (January 19) Rachel was alive and had spoken with family members," said Coakley. She also says that authorities believe, "at some time on Friday morning, Neil Entwistle, with a firearm that we believe he had secured some time before that from his father-in-law Joseph Materazzo, shot Rachel Entwistle in the head and then proceeded to shoot baby Lillian, who was lying on the bed next to her mother. We believe possibly that this was intended to be a murder suicide, but we cannot confirm that. The murder was effected, the suicide was not. Forensic evidence linked the gun to Mr. Entwistle and his wife, but she had never used it (the gun). What we believe happened next was that Neil Entwistle returned the gun to his father-in-law's home, that he then made preparations to leave the country."

She also stated that Entwistle was observed at Boston's Logan International Airport buying a one way ticket to England.

"He was then in Worksop with his parents. Authorities went to the UK to pursue that investigation. They returned, the investigation pursued. We explored motive, with witnesses, with information from searches, internet capabilities," Coakley added. "Based upon that information and forensic information late Tuesday afternoon that linked the 22 handgun owned by Joseph Materazzo both to Neil Entwistle and to Rachel, we believed we had probable cause to seek an arrest warrant for Neil

Entwistle's arrest."

Framingham District Court issued the warrant for his arrest last night.

Entwistle has been at his parents home in England since last month and reportedly refused to cooperate with Massachusetts investigators when they arrived in England to question him about the deaths.

So far, Entwistle has not spoken in public nor did he attend the funerals of his wife and child.

Berlin court repeals preliminary injunction against Wikimedia Germany

The Amtsgericht Berlin-Charlottenburg has repealed an injunction that it had issued in January against Wikimedia Deutschland, the German chapter of the Wikimedia Foundation.

The court found that identifying the deceased Boris Floricic as the hacker Tron in an article of the German Wikipedia does not constitute a breach of the personal rights of Floricic or his parents, the plaintiffs in the law suit. It said that those rights only protect deceased persons from libelous or disfiguring characterisations of their biography; this is not the case in the Wikipedia article. The court also found that the personal rights of the parents were not infringed upon as well, as the article does not enable anyone to identify them.

The lawyer of the parents, Friedrich Kurz, called the decision "arbitrary", "tangibly illegal" and a "misjudgment" as his clients have a unique surname which would make it possible to connect Tron to them. He announced that he would appeal the decision, even to

the European Court of Human Rights if necessary.

The chairman of Wikimedia Deutschland, Kurt Jansson, said they are happy that the court "confirmed our interpretation of the law completely" and hoped that the attorney of the plaintiffs would refrain from taking further legal actions due to the "decidedness" of the ruling.

The court in Berlin had issued an injunction against Wikimedia Deutschland on January 17th, banning them from redirecting www.wikipedia.de to de.wikipedia.org.

Repeal of ministerial control of RU486 bill passes Australian Senate

The bill on whether the Australian Federal Health Minister Tony Abbott should not exercise ministerial control of the abortifacient RU486 has passed the Australian Senate February 9, 2006. If the bill passes the Australian House of Representatives, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) will exercise control and evaluation of the suitability of the drug for use in Australia.

Senators were allowed a free vote on the issue. The result of the vote on the third reading, the final stage of the bill, was 45 for to 28 against the TGA exercising control.

Home Office release statistics showing drop in UK's violent crime

The Home Office department of the UK government have released statistics claiming an 11 percent drop in violent crime over the 2005 Christmas period, with a 21 percent drop in 'serious violent crime'.

This drop in violent crime

coincided with a six week police campaign, aimed at reducing the level of alcohol related disorders. Home Secretary Charles Clarke said "[these] figures are a credit to all those committed to tackling alcohol related disorder. Delivering results, reducing violent crime and underage sales in local communities takes us another step closer to removing such unacceptable behaviour from our streets."

The police campaign followed the introduction of new UK licensing laws which allow pubs and bars to potentially open for longer than the previous 11PM curfew, with '24 hour' opening a possibility. Critics, including the opposition Conservative party, had predicted that this would lead to a rise in drunken behaviour. Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell, a strong proponent of the new laws, said of the statistics "thanks to the new licensing laws, the police and local authorities have joined forces to use tougher powers to deal with the problem at the source."

The Conservative Party are accusing the government of spinning the statistics, suggesting that the drop in violent crime was due to the police campaign. Shadow Home Secretary David Davis said "what this shows is that if you put more bobbies on the street you will cut crime. However these figures are a result of a six-week crack down on violence which cost £2.5m - what happens when this money runs out?"

Bird flu spreading through Indonesia and China

Two Indonesian women, 23 and 27, have tested positive for the H5N1 strain of avian influenza. They are in "serious condition but seem to be improving," said Hariadi Wibisono, a senior health

ministry official. They are being treated in the designated bird flu hospital, Sulianti Suroso in eastern Jakarta. It is believed that both women had contact with infected poultry. This brings Indonesia's number of confirmed cases of the virus to 25.

A 26 year old female farmer in Fujian, China whose surname is Lin, also has the deadly H5N1 virus. She was admitted to the hospital in January, but it was only confirmed on Wednesday that she had the virus. Some of the people that have come in close contact with the woman are under observation by local health officials. Her current condition is reported as stable. This is China's eleventh confirmed case of the virus.

Julie Hall of the Beijing-based World Health Organization said that the latest patient was "highly likely to have had contact with sick animals," but the WHO is still waiting for information on how she could have gotten the disease.

Experts believe that migrating birds are playing a role in spreading the virus, but most believe poultry movement, poultry products and poultry manure, are the main causes.

As avian influenza confirmed in Nigeria, "We shouldn't assume that is just in Nigeria" said David Nabarro, the United Nations' coordinator for bird flu and pandemic influenza. "The outbreak in Nigeria means [we] have another central point for the virus to become embedded into the poultry population."

About 20 countries have reported outbreaks of the virus in birds which has sickened people who come in contact with the infected

birds. If the rate of human infection continues to increase, so does the chance the virus will change into a form easily transmitted by humans.

US Senate offices evacuated

Reports say that an office building for members of the United States Senate in Washington, D.C. was evacuated after tests detected the presence of a "possible nerve agent". The hazardous materials division has since determined that it was a false alarm. It is possible that a cleaning solvent could have tripped the sensor.

"At approximately 1830 (2330 GMT) this evening (Wednesday) we received an alarm at the Capitol Police for a nerve agent in the attic of the Russell Building," Capitol Police Sergeant Kimberly Schneider said. "This is on the Senate side of the Capitol. At this time we have received negative results on this testing. At this time, nobody has indicated that there are any symptoms present... a runny nose or something of that nature. That would indicate a presence of a nerve agent and nobody has reported that thus far."

Eight senators and over 200 senate staff members were evacuated into an underground garage next to the building until 2130 (230 GMT). The people were then briefed on the situation and screened, however no one showed symptoms of exposure to a biological agent.

Sweden reaffirms aims for oil-free economy

In the past year, Mona Sahlin, the Swedish Minister for Sustainable Development, announced plans to break the nation's dependency on oil by 2020, without building new nuclear plants. She stated that

"There shall always be better alternatives to oil, which means no house should need oil for heating, and no driver should need to turn solely to petrol."

As part of the program, Sweden has recently organized the roles of various agencies in the expansion of its wind power program.

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences is concerned the oil supply is peaking and that future high oil prices could cause global economic recession. Sweden currently gets the majority of its electricity from nuclear and hydroelectric power, and 26% of all its energy comes from renewables (6% is the EU average). Sweden's long term aims for energy independence are partially rooted in the 1970s oil shocks.

In related news, Exxon Mobil Senior Vice President Stuart McGill claimed on Tuesday that energy independence for the United States "is simply not feasible in any time period relevant to our discussion today." He stated "No combination of conservation measures, alternative energy sources and technological advances could realistically and economically provide a way to completely replace those imports in the short or medium term." McGill proposed "energy interdependence" as the solution best suited to importing nations.

George Deutsch resigns NASA post after Texas A&M refutes his resume

George Deutsch, a controversial George W. Bush appointee at NASA, resigned his post as press officer the same day that Texas A&M University confirmed that he never graduated from the school. The resume of the 24-year old had

claimed he received a "Bachelor of Arts in journalism, Class of 2003."

Mr. Deutsch gained notoriety when it was revealed he had instructed NASA web site designers to insert the word "theory" at every mention of the Big Bang, on the grounds that it was a religious matter. "This is more than a science issue, it is a religious issue. And I would hate to think that young people would only be getting one-half of this debate from NASA." said Mr Deutsch in an e-mail.

Mr. Deutsch also told public affairs workers to limit reporters' access to James Hansen, a top climate scientist and longtime director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies. Dr. Hansen's lectures and papers were also to have been censored by public affairs workers. Dr. Hansen stated he would ignore the restrictions, which came through the less official channels of phone calls.

Dr. Michael Griffin, NASA chief, appeared to back Dr. Hansen's claims of internal censorship, when he sent a strongly worded email message to all NASA employees stating "It is not the job of public-affairs officers to alter, filter or adjust engineering or scientific material produced by NASA's technical staff." Several other NASA employees reported similar tampering after the incident. NASA personnel told the New York Times that "Mr. Deutsch played a small but significant role in an intensifying effort at the agency to exert political control over the flow of information to the public."

Climate science has long been linked with the space program because many of the underlying mathematical modeling techniques

were originally developed to help understand the atmospheres of other planets, such as Venus.

Mr. Deutsch was given his job in NASA's public affairs office in Washington after working on President Bush's re-election campaign and inaugural committee.

Today in History

1258 - Hulagu Khan and the Mongols sacked and burned Baghdad, a cultural and commercial centre of the Islamic world at the time, ending the rule of the Abbasid caliphate.

1763 - Britain and Spain partitioned New France by the Treaty of Paris, and decimated the French colonial empire.

1840 - Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (pictured) married Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom at the Chapel Royal.

1962 - "Rudolf Abel," a Soviet spy arrested by the FBI, was exchanged for Gary Powers, the pilot of an U.S. Air Force spy plane shot down in the U-2 Incident.

1996 - Deep Blue, the chess-playing computer, defeated International Grandmaster and World Chess Champion Garry Kasparov in a game of chess for the first time.

Quote of the Day

"Does it really matter what these affectionate people do — so long as they don't do it in the streets and frighten the horses?"

~ Mrs Patrick Campbell

About Wikinews

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