



Top Stories

Evangelist Jerry Falwell dies at age 73

Evangelist Jerry Falwell dies after being found unresponsive by Ron Godwin, Liberty University's executive vice president, around 10:45am ET, Tuesday. His death was confirmed at Lynchburg General Hospital at 2:10pm ET after "CPR efforts were unsuccessful". He was 73 years old.

Microsoft claims open source software breaches its patents

Microsoft's chief lawyer Brad Smith claimed in an interview published in the magazine Fortune on Monday that open-source software products violate 235 of Microsoft's patents.

Featured story

Penguin swims ashore in Peru

A Magellanic Penguin, who normally makes its home off the coast of Chile where the Pacific Ocean waters are cold, took a small vacation on the coast of Peru, an event that has never happened before in the country.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Lt. Gen. Douglas Lute has been chosen to be President Bush's "war czar," overseeing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin resigns.
- Palestinian factional violence claims 8 more lives as violence erupts on the Israeli border with

Wikipedia Current Events

Fatah and Hamas fighting for dominance at the Karni cargo crossing in Gaza, ending Monday night's ceasefire agreement.

- The United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice meets with the President of Russia Vladimir Putin.
- Canadian publisher The Thomson Corporation agrees to buy Reuters for £8.7 billion creating the world's biggest financial news and data group.
- The death toll for violence associated with the Philippine general election rises to 126.
- A bomb attack on a hotel in Peshawar, Pakistan, kills at least 24 people.
- David Bain, who was convicted for murder in one of New Zealand's most controversial trials, is released on bail while awaiting a retrial following an appeal to the Privy Council in March.

Microsoft claims some open source software breaches its patents

Software giant Microsoft's chief lawyer Brad Smith claimed in an interview published in the magazine Fortune on Monday that open-source software products violate 235 of Microsoft's patents. The main transgressors are claimed to be Linux (107 patents) and OpenOffice.org (45), with e-mail programs infringing 15 patents. Microsoft wants royalties to compensate for the patent breaches.

According to Microsoft's Vice-President of intellectual property and licensing, Horacio Gutierrez, the company wants to negotiate with the open-source companies rather than sue them. "If we wanted to litigate we would have done that a long time ago. Litigation is not an effective way of going about solutions," Gutierrez said. According to him, Microsoft has over the last years tried to work towards a "constructive" solution to the alleged problem of patent violation.

Microsoft in the past has used the strategy of cross-licensing to get royalties from companies who infringe their patents, for example in their deal with Novell. On a company blog, Novell reiterated that their deal "is in no way an acknowledgment that Linux infringes upon any Microsoft intellectual property."

"We don't think that customers will want to continue on without a solution to the problem," Gutierrez said about Microsoft's approach to guaranteeing companies that they won't get sued because they use the allegedly patent-infringing Linux operating system.

The upcoming third version of the GPL licence, the licence which Linux is released under, will prohibit Linux distributors to agree to patent royalty deals. Microsoft called these "attempts to tear down the bridge between proprietary and open-source software that Microsoft has worked to build with the industry and customers."

A related U.S. Supreme Court ruling from April 30th showed how software patents are subject to court challenges; basically, innovations that can be patented, and if the innovations are just "obvious", the patent is weaker. Joe Lindsay, information officer for a mortgage company, pointed out that the Unix code that Linux is based upon preceded Microsoft Windows, which might also be a reason for some patents to be invalid.

Red Hat, the biggest Linux distributor, said in a statement on Monday: "The reality is that the community development approach of free and open source code represents a healthy development paradigm, which, when viewed from the perspective of pending lawsuits related to intellectual property, is at least as safe as proprietary software." — Red Hat IP Team

Larry Augustin, former CEO of a company called VA Linux (now VA Software), responsible among other things for launching SourceForge.net, an open-source software development community, posted a message on his blog under the title "It's Time for Microsoft to Put Up or Shut Up": "If Microsoft believes that Free and Open Source Software violates any of their patents, let them put those patents forward now, in the light of day, where we can all evaluate them on their merits. If not, then stop trying to bully customers into paying royalties to use Open Source."

According to the Fortune report, more than half of the Fortune 500 companies are estimated to use Linux in their data centers.

The Taj Mahal turning yellow due to pollution

The Taj Mahal, one of India's most famed monuments, known for its white marble, has been gradually turning yellowish. Particulate matter associated with air pollution has been accumulating on the Taj Mahal giving the marble a yellow look.

Authorities are planning to give the Taj Mahal a mud bath. The mud bath works by absorbing the dirt while drying. Then, when the mud has dried, having absorbed the particulate matter, the mud is washed off. The cost has been assessed at US\$230,000, and will be necessary to be repeated every two to three years to keep the Taj Mahal's marble clean.

Roughly 3,000,000 tourists visit the monument every year, and visitors are required to park 2 miles away from the monument to reduce pollution around the area.

Televangelist Jerry Falwell dies at age 73

Jerry Falwell was found unresponsive by Ron Godwin, Liberty University's executive vice president, around 10:45 am ET. He was taken to Lynchburg General Hospital where "CPR efforts were unsuccessful". As of 2:10 pm ET, during a live press conference, a doctor for the hospital confirmed that Falwell had died of "cardiac arrhythmia, or sudden cardiac death". Godwin had eaten breakfast with Falwell earlier and stated that he seemed "fine, business as usual."

Falwell, a controversial minister, suffered from two health conditions in 2005, and had a history of heart illness. While Falwell was a leader of the Christian right, he is perhaps most well-known for his controversial claims against

"liberals", homosexuals, and Muslims.

India's Assam state hit by fresh violence

A bomb explosion killed two people and injured ten others in the capital of the northeast Indian state of Assam on Monday.

Assamese protesters who were blockading a highway over the killing of a local civilian in an anti-insurgency operation last week, clashed with tea-plantation workers who's supplies were interrupted by the blockage. Five people died in the ensuing violence on Sunday.

Senior Superintendent of Police S.N. Singh says that the bomb had been left on a motorbike in the market area of the capital, Guwahati. Separatist groups fighting for an independent Assamese state have been blamed for the attack.

Over 20 bombings had been carried out by the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) over the last two months. Nineteen people were injured in the capital last week and a further eight were injured in a car bomb explosion.

Attacks by the ULFA killed eighty people, mostly migrant workers in January. The Indian security forces have been fighting the separatists groups since 1990, and have killed 55 rebels and arrested over 500 since the start of 2007.

Virgin Media investors want to discuss company's strategy

Virgin Media announced weak results last week, in part due to competition from Sky. Virgin Media lost 47,000 customers from January to March 2007, while Sky gained 51,000 customers in the same time period.

Franklin Mutual Advisers, which has 9.4% of the Virgin Media shares (Sir Richard Branson owns 11%) wants to have a meeting with Virgin Media about its "strategic direction, corporate governance and management". Franklin Mutual Advisers is known to take great interest in the companies in which it invests.

This has caused many of the other investors of Virgin Media to demand meetings with the management of the company. The demands are due to confusion among shareholders at the direction in which the company is heading, *The Guardian* reports. After the attempt to buy ITV was stopped last year, the shareholders think that Virgin Media may lose its battle with Sky and TalkTalk.

Another issue causing concerns amongst investors is the £25.2 million pay cheques for the top seven executives of Virgin Media. Virgin Media reported a £15.3 million loss last year.

Immediate life insurance website launched, first in world

The first website in the world allowing consumers to buy life insurance online instantly has been launched today, targeting specifically New Zealanders.

The website, run by life insurance company Pinnacle Life, allows New Zealanders in many countries in the world to buy life insurance online without the need for a medical examination. Once the application has been approved, which is done immediately, the consumer can receive a \$500,000 life insurance policy via an automatic e-mail. However, if certain conditions have been highlighted, then person to person contact is required to finalise the process.

Ed Saul, senior partner and architect of the new website, says, "We're giving consumers a quicker and easier way to buy life insurance. Instead of submitting an application form and waiting days for a policy to be approved and issued, we do it online and we do it immediately."

"The revolutionary website gives consumers complete control over the buying process whilst eliminating the previously obligatory involvement of people and paper. This is a global test case eagerly watched by the insurance industry around the world," Mr Saul said.

When applying online, a few typical questions are asked on personal information and if the applicant has had any previous illnesses or diseases.

The countries where New Zealand citizens are allowed to apply are UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore and the USA.

Penguin swims ashore in Peru

A Magellanic Penguin, who normally makes its home off the coast of Chile where the Pacific Ocean waters are cold, has taken a small vacation on the coast of Peru, an event that has never happened before in the country.

According to scientists, the penguin was looking for food when it got lost in the ocean currents off Peru's coast. It is reported that the penguin swam nearly 3,100 miles [5,000 kilometers] off course.

"It seems he was disoriented and got lost in the sea due to the different ocean currents. In his endless search for food, he casually climbed up on our shores, something that has never

happened before," said the head of the National Paracas Reserve in Peru, Wilder Canales.

For the moment, the penguin will stay at the reserve, in its natural habitat until researchers can coordinate for the penguin's release with officials in Chile. The penguin also required a small injury to be fixed that he received from a fishing net during his travels.

"It has not been kept in a cage or anything like that. It has been kept where it can live naturally," said David Orosco a biologist at the reserve.

PayPal receives banking licence

The online payment service PayPal has received a banking licence in Luxembourg, promoting it to the status of a bank. As a consequence PayPal will move their headquarters to Luxembourg.

Since 2004 PayPal had the status of an Electronic Money Issuer supervised by the U.K. Financial Services Authority. Having an official bank status opens new prospects for the company: "This will allow us to actively scout retailers in different European countries. With our British licence, we could only do that in the U.K. itself, and in other countries we could only react to requests of the retailers themselves," Christopher Coonen, General Manager of PayPal Southern Europe and Benelux, explained.

The change will not affect existing customers dramatically says Coonen: "We are going to inform them of the new status, and they will have to accept our terms of service again." He also said that for now, there were no plans to use the new licence to offer traditional banking services, but the possibility

was being evaluated by PayPal. Working with local partners would be an option to accomplish this, according to Coonen.

The British newspaper The Daily Telegraph speculates that the move is part of a strategy to compete with Google's payment service Google Checkout, which launched in the U.K. last month.

PayPal has 130 million users worldwide, and 35 million customers in Europe. Payments via its mother company eBay continue to make up 60% of PayPal's revenues. More than half of Britain's internet users have a PayPal account.

Japanese boy brings severed head of his mother to police station

A boy from Aizuwakamatsu, Japan a town just north of Tokyo, walked into the local police station with a sports bag which police say contained the severed head of his mother.

"If it's true, then it is horrendous," said Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki, the head spokesman for the Japanese government.

Police say the 17-year-old boy told them that he killed his mother Monday night, and that he acted alone. Police later found the mother's remains inside the boy's apartment. Police say that an object much like a knife was used to sever her head.

There have been a series of murders involving the dismemberment of body parts in Japan in the past few months. A leg severed from an unknown body was found in Tokyo inside a trash bin on Monday. A woman, 32, was arrested in January when she admitted to murdering her

husband, dismembering his body, then placed his remains around several spots in Tokyo.

US commuter rail accident in Pennsylvania injures over 30

Shortly after 5:00 pm EDT on Monday, a northbound R6 SEPTA Regional Rail train collided with a northbound R5 train in the Center City section of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The collision occurred past Philadelphia's Market East Station, near 9th and Vine Streets. About 30 to 40 people on board the two trains suffered minor injuries, most of whom were riding in the front of the R6 train, however no serious or life-threatening injuries were reported.

The R6 train, heading towards Norristown, Pennsylvania, departed Suburban Station at 4:44 pm, and arrived at Market East Station at 4:50 pm. The R5 train, heading towards Doylestown, Pennsylvania, was running late and traveling right behind it was the R6. Shortly after the R5 departed from Market East Station, the train deployed its air brakes in the tunnel, and then collided with the R6. One rider claimed, "All of the sudden, there was a real hard jerk, and the train just came to a complete stop. It felt like we hit something hard. But I was all right."

After the collision, the R5 train was unloaded, and its 17 injured victims were taken to Jefferson University, Hahnemann University, and University of Pennsylvania hospitals. After backing up to Market East Station to unload its passengers, the R6 later proceeded to the Temple University station to unload those who were injured, after officials realized it would be easier to unload at the above-ground station. Police officers from the Philadelphia Police Department, SEPTA, and Temple University,

rushed to the Temple University train station upon the train's arrival to help transport injured victims to the nearby Temple University Hospital. Firefighters and paramedics arrived at the station to assist the victims as well, transporting some of them off the train on stretchers.

Uninjured passengers on the R6 train were transported by bus from Market East to Temple University, where they boarded an arriving R6 express train, which immediately switched to local service. Following the collision, all trains passing through Market East Station were affected by delays of at least 20 minutes or more. The out-of-service R6 train remained on one of the two outbound tracks at Temple University station, causing all incoming trains from Center City to queue behind one another on a single track, causing great delays for arriving trains at that station as well.

Paramedics remained on the scene for two hours, and the accident scene was finally cleaned up by 7:00 pm EDT. By 8:00 pm EDT, Regional Rail trains were running back on schedule after encountering delays of up to one hour.

Today in History

1204 - Fourth Crusade: Count Baldwin IX of Flanders was crowned the first Latin Emperor in Constantinople.

1811 - Peninsular War: An allied force of British, Spanish, and Portuguese defeated the French Army at the Battle of Albuera.

1866 - Root beer was first prepared commercially.

1929 - The first Academy Awards were handed out at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel in Los Angeles.

1943 - World War II: SS-Brigadeführer Jürgen Stroop put an

end to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the first mass uprising in Poland against the Nazi occupation during the Holocaust.
 May 16 is Jerusalem Day in Israel (2007)

Quote of the Day

picaroon; v

1. To behave as a pirate; to seek opportunities to loot.

Word of the Day

The universe is flux, life is opinion.
 ~ Marcus Aurelius

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