WIKINEWS PRINT EDITION

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 scandal allegations in recent 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

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

Wikipedia Current Events

• Republic Day celebrations in India. Saudi King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud is in India as chief guest for the Republic Day celebration.

Iran accused of blocking BBC Website

The BBC News Website and a Civil Liberties organization are claiming that the popular BBC Persian website has been blocked by the government of Iran.

Reports indicate that the cities of Shiraz and Zahedan are unable to access bbcpersian.com. As of press time no explanation has been given for the block. The BBC said that it would approach the Iranian government to ask about getting unblocked.

Iranian internet providers routinely block pornographic and anti-Islamic websites, but they also block some pro-reform websites and blogs, sometimes permanently. This follows a history of alleged censorship - in 2004 the pro-reform Emrooz, Rooydad and Baamdad online newspapers were reported to have been shut down or blocked often.

Fears about Songhua settled

Following an explosion in November of 2005, China's Songhua river was contaminated with nitrobenzene and similar chemicals. Its clean-up by The State Environmental Protection Administration and others was covered previously on wikinews.

The State Environmental Protection Administration Minister Zhou Shengxian has said that "The water quality of the Songhua River will not exceed national standards on a large scale during the spring thaw, and fish in the river and from pounds along the banks are safe to eat." Zhou further guaranteed that livestock near the river banks and products from such livestock to be safe to eat, and that the growth of crops will not be inhibited by use of water from the Songhua River for irrigation.

Concerns of residents that the possible release of remnants of nitrobenzene that may have been trapped in the ice and in the sediment might occur and endanger the safe utilization of the river after the influence of a period of being frozen have been settled.

Zhou said that research indicated only a small amounts of the toxic chemical within the ice and that the quantity that could be entrapped in the sediment was limited by its structure as composed mostly of sand. These characteristics and the inevitable high flow rate of the river once the winter's ice melts in the spring will allow the water to be safe said Zhou, referencing an interim assessment of the river spill done by a consortium which began the assessment on December 13 2005.

Chen Jining of Tsinghua University's Department of Environmental Science and Engineering, commented that "Even in the rare cases when levels are beyond standards in some places, we also have the technology in place for example, activated carbon to ensure safe drinking water supplies."

Zhou has also stated that the joint program with Russia to monitor boundary rivers will continue. The front of the pollution from the explosion has been predicted to reach the estuary of the Armur river in Russia near the end of January 2006.

Scientists discover Earth-like planet

A group of international scientists from Princeton University and other institutions have discovered the smallest Earth-like planet yet, just outside our solar system.

The new planet is about 25,000 light years away, and is close to the center of the Milky Way.

The discovery was announced in the Nature Journal magazine. The journal also states the planet was found using a method called gravitational microlensing, which detects small planets with a mass like that of Earth.

Gravitational microlensing is where a light from a distant star is bent and magnified by the gravitational field of a foreground star. The presence of a planet around the foreground star causes light from the distant star to become momentarily brighter.

However, scientists say that the cold temperatures on the planet make the chance of finding any life on it "unlikely."

"We may predict with reasonable probability that microlensing will discover planets with masses like that of Earth at a similar distance from their stars and with comparable surface temperature," said study co-author Bohdan Paczynski from Princeton University.

So far the planet only goes by

OGLE-2005-BLG-390Lb, and takes about ten years to orbit its parent star, a red dwarf. The star is similar to our sun except its smaller and much cooler in temperature.

Scientists say the new planet has a rocky core and a thin atmosphere and because of its "very large orbit and cooler parent star, makes it a very cold world."

The predicted surface temperature is -220° Celsius (-364° F), which means its surface is likely to be a layer of frozen liquid. Because of this, scientists say the planet may more closely resemble a massive version of Pluto.

"This is very exciting and important," said Professor Michael Bode from Liverpool John Moores University, a principal investigator for the RoboNet project which helped to collaborate on the research. "This is the most Earth-like planet we have discovered to date, in terms of its mass and the distance from its parent star. Most of the other planets that have been discovered are either much more massive, much hotter or both."

This is the third planet in two years that scientists have found using gravitational microlensing.

In the past, more than 150 planets outside our solar system were found using a technique known as the radial velocity method. This method observes a wobble in stars caused by the planet's gravitational effects.

CIA "rendition" confirmed in Europe

The Council of Europe is pressing member governments to provide information concerning CIA prisons operating secretly in

Europe.

In an interim report by the human rights council rapporteur, Swiss senator Dick Marty made public the 42-member nation's preliminary conclusions regarding CIA activity on European Union soil.

Marty reported, "Individuals have been abducted, deprived of their liberty and transported to different destinations in Europe, to be handed over to countries in which they have suffered degrading treatment and torture." The report estimates the rendition of "more than a hundred persons."

But when it comes right down to it, no irrefutable evidence exists to confirm allegations that the CIA operated secret detention centers in Europe. "There is a great deal of coherent, convergent evidence pointing to the existence of a system of 'relocation' or 'outsourcing of torture'," the report stated while further noting that, "It is highly unlikely that European governments, or at least their intelligence services, were unaware."

"Our aim is to find out the truth that is being hidden from us today", he said. He adds that he is afraid of "the pressure put on the media in the United States not to report on this affair."

A researcher for Human Rights Watch, John Swift, said; "Cooperation is going to be needed if this investigation is going to succeed. European governments are at a crossroads. They can decide to cooperate with this investigation and uphold European traditions of human rights, or they can continue their romance with the CIA. But they can't do both."

The report has also been criticized for appearing to lack new content and to be incomplete. Former minister for Europe and British member of parliament Denis MacShane has said that Marty's report "has more holes than a Swiss cheese." US State Department spokesman Sean McCormack has rejected the report and stated that it was an example of the "same old reports wrapped up in some new rhetoric. There's nothing new here."

US Department of Homeland Security secretary Michael Chertoff has stated regarding the US government that "the government acts in accordance with the law and with respect to the sovereignty of host countries in which it operates," and further stated that "The authorities are free to investigate what they want to investigate but we should not allow ourselves to be distracted from the need to identify, prevent and protect against terrorist acts of violence."

The group Amnesty International USA is calling for the US Congress to create a commission to investigate detention and interrogation practices. The United States neither confirms nor denies the existence of secret detention centers.

Disney buys Pixar
The Walt Disney Company has finalized a $7.4 billion deal to acquire its long-time partner Pixar in an all stock buy-out. The deal will make Steve Jobs, current Pixar and Apple CEO, Disney's largest shareholder with about 7% (valued at over $3.5 billion) and a member of the board of directors.

The merger was speculated all day Tuesday on the stock market and the annoucement came just after trading closed for the day. Terms of the merger include Pixar's John Lasseter becoming Disney's new chief creative officer, in charge of animation at the combined Disney-Pixar Animation Studios, as well as principal creative advisor at Walt Disney Imagineering, the unit of the company responsible for research and development of Disney theme parks worldwide.

Jobs purchased what became Pixar for $10 million in 1986 from George Lucas's computer animation division at Lucasfilm. Toy Story, its first feature film came a decade later, and began a long string of animation hits. Such success proved to be increasingly elusive for Disney to manage on its own. The partnership between the two studios had become shakey in recent years, as former Disney head Michael Eisner clashed with Jobs over renewal terms of their agreement. In 2003, prior to his dismissal from Disney, Eisner infuriated Pixar's creative team by predicting Finding Nemo would be a failure. Steve Jobs broke off negotiations in January 2004, having told one executive previously, "I don't see how the relationship can continue as long as Eisner is there."

U.S. Democrats highlight water quality issues for troops in Iraq
According to former employees of the Halliburton subsidiary KBR and internal company documents, coalition troops at a U.S. military base in Iraq may have been exposed to contaminated water and the company puportedly blocked efforts to alert the U.S. military.

"We exposed a base camp population (military and civilian) to a water source that was not treated," reads a July 15, 2005 memo by William Granger, KBR's official in charge of water quality in Iraq and also Kuwait.

"The level of contamination was roughly 2x the normal contamination of untreated water from the Euphrates River," Granger said in documents distributed amongst the press by Democrats, who are holding a public inquiry into the allegations.

Halliburton issued a statement stating it had found "no evidence to substantiate allegations made by these former employees."

Ken May, another former KBR employee, said that instances of diarrhea and stomach cramps were numerous.

Halliburton stated that their own inspection found no contaminated water, and no medical evidence to substantiate the claims of illness. According to Marine Corps Major Tim Keefe – a military spokesman – a military medical unit found nothing out of the ordinary with regards to the water quality. Keefe stated, "The allegations appear not to have merit"

Water expert, Ben Carter, of Cedar City, Utah, wrote, "It is my opinion that the water source is without question contaminated with numerous micro-organisms, including Coliform bacteria. There is little doubt that raw sewage is routinely dumped upstream of intake much less than the required 2 mile distance."

Carter said that after he told company officials that they should notify the military, "They told me it was none of my concern and to keep my mouth shut," he said.

"They brushed it under the carpet," Carter said. "I told

everyone, 'Don't take showers, use bottled water."

According to a July 14, 2005 report authored by Jennifer Dellinger, it is claimed that Halliburton's public relations department was aware of the problem, a statement from the department is claimed to state, "I don't want to turn it into a big issue right now, but if we end up getting some media calls I want to make sure we have all the facts so we are ready to respond."

The WB and UPN networks to become the CW network

Warner Bros. Entertainment (a division of Time Warner, Inc.) and CBS Corporation announced today the merger of their two struggling television networks together to form one jointly owned network which will debut this fall.

The new network, which is to be called CW (for CBS-Warner) will replace UPN and The WB networks, which will shut down. The network will be a 50-50 partnership between CBS and Warner Brothers. The network will be carried on stations owned by the Tribune Company, amongst others.

The merger is in response to the struggling of both networks, neither of which have attracted much viewership away from the big four networks since they being formed in the early 90s. However each have had some strengths. The WB has been more popular with younger viewers and has had hits with televison shows Smallvile and Gilmore Girls. UPN has recently received critical acclaim for its sitcom Everybody Hates Chris and World Wrestling Entertainment's Smackdown! has been a mainstay since it debuted on the network. The new

network's schedule will be annouced in May; until then the networks will operate their schedules indepedently. The new network is planning to target the 18-34 age bracket in prime time, and will contain both shows from the WB and UPN.

With UPN's 12 affilated station, together with Tribune's 16 stations gives the new network coverage over half of the country. The Tribune stations that will be apart of the new network is WGN in Chicago, WB flagship station, WPIX in New York and KTLA in Los Angeles. WPIX will become the flagship station of the new network. Tribune will relinquish its 22.5% stake in the WB in return for a 10-year affiliation agreement with the network in turn.

Dawn Ostroff, currently the president of WB, will become president of entertaiment and John Maatta, currently the chief operating officer of the WB, will become chief operating officer of the CW.

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 surveilance 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 employers 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/collectiv

e_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.

Today in History
1700 - The magnitude 9 Cascadia Earthquake took place off the Pacific coast of the American Northwest, as evidenced by Japanese records of tsunamis.
1788 - The British First Fleet, led by Captain Arthur Phillip, landed at Sydney Cove just outside present-day Sydney, establishing the first permanent European settlement in Australia.
1950 - President Rajendra Prasad succeeded Rajaji the last Governor General as the head of state of India and the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian armed forces.
1983 - Lotus 1-2-3, a hugely popular spreadsheet program, was first released.
January 26 is Australia Day in Australia (1788), Republic Day in India (1950).

Quote of the Day
"I know war as few other men now living know it, and nothing to me is more revolting. I have long advocated its complete abolition, as its very destructiveness on both friend and foe has rendered it useless as a means of settling international disputes... But once war is forced upon us, there is no other alternative than to apply every available means to bring it to a swift end." ~ Douglas MacArthur

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