

PEACH

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fusion

A TOOLBOX FOR TECHNOLOGY



EXPRESS SECURITY

The international airport of Silicon Valley will soon become the nation's second airfield to offer a high-tech express lane for security checks. The so-called "Registered Traveler" program offers airline passengers a prepaid, pre-approved security pass — complete with fingerprint and eye scans. Enrolled passengers who pay a fee and get a background check can bypass the airport's general security checkpoint, heading instead for a more exclusive security lane. The program debuted at the Orlando International Airport in Florida, where more than 10,000 members pay a \$79.95 annual fee. Other airports across the nation are expected to adopt the program as well, creating what the Transportation Security Administration hopes will be a fully interoperable network by June.

NEW AD MODEL

Internet giants Google and Yahoo are testing a new form of online advertising that encourages people to pick up the phone rather than click on a link, lending credibility to the "pay-per-call" ad model. With pay-per-call, users are directed to call the advertiser, who is billed for each phone referral. At some sites, including Time Warner's America Online, the customer must pick up a phone and dial the number. Google is testing a variant in which users click on a phone icon and type their number into a box. Google then dials the user, who hears ringing until the merchant answers. Google says the service is free for callers even on long-distance calls, and it promises not to divulge the caller's number to anyone. Advocates of pay-per-call, including some merchants who have tried it, say customers who call are ready to buy and aren't just browsing the Internet; thus, search engines can charge more — \$2 to \$10 or even more per call, compared with less than \$1 per click.

MUSIC BACKUP

The founder of the original MP3.com Web site for downloading music has launched a service that lets computer users store their music files on the Internet and retrieve from pretty much anywhere. Users can synch up their files and playlists to multiple computers, personal digital assistants and, eventually, mobile phones and other devices, said Michael Robertson, chief executive of San Diego-based MP3tunes. Oboe costs \$39.95 a year and includes unlimited storage and bandwidth. A free version lets users upload content and stream it to other computers but does not allow for downloading and offline play. The venture is Robertson's second attempt at bringing to market a digital "music locker" service. In 1999, he bought hundreds of thousands of CDs and made them accessible through MP3.com to people who already owned that CD. But recording companies sued, and MP3.com ultimately went to the parent of Universal Music. The Recording Industry Association of America declined to comment Wednesday on the new venture.

SECURITY TEST

Microsoft is offering the public a free test version of its new service for protecting consumers from viruses and other Internet threats. The company plans to eventually charge for Windows OneCare Live, though it has yet to announce subscription fees. In the test version, OneCare will update itself automatically on Internet-linked computers to deal with the most recent threats, while performing other PC tuneups to keep computers running smoothly. The OneCare service is also an early test of Microsoft's new effort to offer more Internet-based software and services, so it can better compete against the likes of Google and Yahoo.

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FROM THE BLADE'S WIRE SERVICES AND STAFF.
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On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me ... an Xbox 3-6-0 (or at least I'm hoping so.) With so many titles overflowing the store shelves this holiday season, here are 15 game and gear picks you can't go wrong with. — Jake Jones

A HOLIDAY guide TO THE games

4. CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE

(PS2, XBOX, GAMECUBE, PC) RATED T
As a part of America's most decorated and heroic fighting unit, The Big Red One, you'll work together with your squad to complete a variety of ultra-realistic combat missions.



6. EYETOY: KINETIC (PS2) RATED E

The folks at Sony keep getting gamers off the couch and (literally) into the action. In Kinetic, players can crunch, punch, and kick the holiday calories off with cardio, combat, and toning routines. Body by PlayStation.



8. SONY PSP

With a slew of great games and nearly 300 movies available for this portable powerhouse, the PSP makes those long road trips and waiting rooms bearable. Must-haves for the PSP include Majesco's *Infected*, UBI Soft's *Lumines*, and Rockstar Games' *Liberty City Stories*. In the movie lineup, *Elf* and *Robots* sure look fantastic on the supercrisp screen.



11. NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED

(PS2, XBOX, GAMECUBE, PSP, XBOX360, PC) RATED T
Street races, tuners, and cops — oh my! This white-knuckle ride is fast and fun.



12. THE WARRIORS

(PS2, XBOX) RATED T
Based on the classic 1979 film, this title earns its rating with brutal street fights and potty-mouthed characters. With every gang in New York chasing you, the sense of tension and the replay value are high.



5. DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION ULTRAMIX 3 (XBOX) RATED E

Whether you dance like Travolta or have two left feet, this party favorite is a blast for everyone.



7. RESIDENT EVIL 4

(PS2, GAMECUBE) RATED M
This game is a near-perfect blend of intense, fast-paced action with increasingly unnerving and eerie surroundings. The gameplay, weapons, and overall feel of RE4 are all top-notch — a must for the action/horror fans stocking.



9. BLITZ: THE LEAGUE

(PS2, XBOX) RATED M
Midway may have lost the NFL rights to EA but that's not necessarily a bad thing. Definitely meant for adults, 'Blitz' hits hard.



10. SHREK 2 GBA

(GBA video) RATED E
A 92-minute feature film on the GameBoy Advance — who would have guessed? Turn your GBA into a movie machine with these innovative movie products.



13. SOUL CALIBUR III

(PS2) RATED T
More than 25 beautifully rendered characters, each with a unique fighting style, will have your fingers working overtime in this brawler.



14. SUPER MARIO STRIKERS

(GAMECUBE) RATED E
When Mario and his cartoony crew take the field, the name of the game is fun. This treats you to some powered-up soccer goodness that will be a hit whether you're a sports fan or not.



15. WE LOVE KATAMARI

(PS2) RATED E
Gaming doesn't get much stranger — or more fun — than this sequel to Katamari Damacy that takes players on a rolling ride thru a world packed with stuff to stick to.

ICANN considers freeing up six single-letter domains

By ANICK JESDANUN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Although Internet domain names may be getting longer or more complex as Web sites creatively squeeze into the crowded ".com" address space, most single-letter names like "a.com" and "b.com" remain unused.

That may soon change as the Internet's key oversight agency considers lifting restrictions on the simplest of names.

In response to requests by companies seeking to extend their brands, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers will chart a course for single-letter Web addresses as early as this weekend, when the ICANN board meets in Vancouver, British Columbia. Those names could start to appear next year.

But the transition won't be easy — and it could lead to six-figure sales of this new online real estate, akin to opening New York's Central Park to development.

"Obviously this is a valuable commodity," said Kurt Pritz, ICANN's vice president for business operations.

THE BIG 6

Status of six single-letter names registered before restrictions were in place:

- **q.com** : Jumps to Qwest Communications International Inc.'s qwest.com.
- **x.com** : Goes to eBay Inc.'s PayPal site. X.com Corp. is PayPal's former name.
- **z.com** : Reaches Web page for Nissan North America's Z sports cars.
- **i.net** : Used by I.NET, a domain name registration company.
- **q.net** : Registered to 'Q Networks,' though Web site appears inactive. The Internet Archive last recorded activity at the domain in 1997.
- **x.org** : Home page for X.Org Foundation, which maintains graphical interface technology for Linux and Unix

"How would the name be sold?"

Names are normally released on a first-come, first-served basis for \$10 or less, a policy that favors those who have written programs to automati-

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THE MACHINE

Jump drives are key backups

Some people call them "key-chain" drives. Others use terms like "pen" drive, "flash" drive, or "jump" drive. I call the USB Flash drive one of the best holiday gifts for anyone with a computer.

These marvelous little devices are inexpensive and practical. Give one this year, and that lucky recipient probably will still be using and appreciating it next holiday season.

Flash drives are portable data storage devices. Most are about the size of a man's thumb. They plug into a Universal Serial Bus outlet on a computer, and act like an additional hard drive.

You can save documents, digital music, digital images, and other files on a flash drive. Those files can be backups — just-in-case copies for use if the originals disappear or your hard disk drive crashes. Flash drives also are great for carrying files from one computer to another.

Slip the device into pocket, purse, briefcase, or backpack at home, for instance, and carry it



MICHAEL WOODS

to the office or school. Plug the USB drive into any computer and you can use those files, and add new files. No batteries needed.

USB drives have just about replaced their old-fashioned counterpart, the 3.5-inch floppy diskette. Diskettes can hold about 1.44 megabytes (MB) of data. That was plenty before the digital music/digital image era with its jumbo-sized files. A diskette now can hold only a couple high-resolution images.

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CYAN
MAGENTA
YELLOW
BLACK