

In the eye of the beholder

I ran into a strange situation last month. My organisation upgraded the standard desktop software from IE6 to IE7, and immediately I thought: urk! Every piece of text looked blurry, and even worse the same effect occurred in MS Outlook. I puzzled over this, but worked out that it only happened with HTML mail so probably Outlook was piggy-backing on IE to do its rendering. Anyway, after a bit of digging

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I discovered that back in 2006 Microsoft had introduced in IE7 a product called ClearType that was supposed to make text more readable on LCD screens. Even

more digging revealed that some people had trouble with this effect - I'm one of them. Fortunately it's easy to fix this by turning it off http://www.techrecipes.com/rx/1166/ie7_turn_off_cleartype

Make up your mind, please

In the UK, a survey by AOL has revealed that internet users can be a contradictory bunch. As reported in *The Australian* <http://tinyurl.com/67eruq>, 84 percent said that they would not give away information about their income online, but a few questions later in the survey 89 percent were happy to divulge it. Hmm.

The rise and fall of a good thing

I've written before about Google Page Creator, an interesting little free service from the behemoth, that gave you a WYSIWYG interface to develop simple websites, and the system of course could be tweaked by anyone who knew a bit about HTML or CSS. Google decided not to provide any decent form of online help, relying instead on half a dozen discussion groups where users answered each other's questions—and thereby a community of sorts formed over the

years. About six months ago, we started hearing about a new service to be based on the Jotspot product that Google has bought. And so Google Sites (<http://sites.google.com/>) came about, and the writing was clearly on the wall that the future of GPC (as we called it) was not assured. In August they broke the news that GPC would be terminated in the next few months, and only Sites would be supported. The GPC community was not pleased, and petitions were started and very rude things were said about all concerned. Free services can be relied on (up to a point) but you should always have a backup strategy that you can swing into place when it will become necessary.

The way to the stars

NASA has launched a new website at <http://www.nasaimages.org> in partnership with the Internet Archive, combining 21 different collections of images to produce a superb accumulation of all things Space. The first feature that strikes you on going to the site is the Spaceflight Timeline with its overlapping pop-ups to illustrate the various stages of exploration over the years. As for the more than 140,000 images on the portal—well, you could spend a long time there.

The perils of DRM

Pity the poor publisher in the digital age; they have to make a living but they quite rightly don't want their product stolen. So they come up with some cunning plans to stop their readers from taking their material and doing wicked things with it. But, as Mr S. O. Baldrick used to find, cunning plans often have a fatal flaw. MIS Magazine's online version publishes its articles so that they display clearly on the screen, but if you try to copy the text using your browser only every second letter is picked up. So, when I read their story on the National Library's digital newspaper archive project <http://ndpbeta.nla.gov>.

<http://ndp/del/home> and it didn't have a hyperlink and I tried copying the published URL ... Well, you can guess the rest. I had to type the URL myself, and I'll say that the results are impressive. The NLA is doing well; or as well as OCR technology allows on old newspapers.

Copyright Law and Digital Preservation

The Report of the International Study on the Impact of Copyright Law on Digital Preservation <http://tinyurl.com/5rnrxno> has been published, involving organisations from Australia (the Open Access to Knowledge Law Project at QUT), the Netherlands (the SURFfoundation), the UK (JISC) and the USA (Library of Congress). The basic aim of the project was to review the current state of copyright and related laws and their impact on digital preservation, to make recommendations for legislative reform and other solutions to ensure that preservation institutions can effectively preserve digital works and information in a manner consistent with international laws, and to make recommendations for further study or activities. It's a pretty serious document, but then the subject matter is pretty serious in itself.

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