

2006's Best Business Ideas

Celebrating The Year's Most Imaginative
And Inspiring Business Ideas Around The World

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Welcome!

You've always wanted to start your very own business. You dream of coming up with the next BIG thing that will change the way business works. You want to spread your evolutionary idea to the world. If the above describes you, then you may find this e-book report useful.

This 145-pages report, **2006's Best Business Ideas**, is a compilation of the business ideas and concepts which made it big in 2006. We've included 2005's and 2004's hits as well. As you brainstorm of how to start your own business or how to take your existing business a big step forward in the year 2007 and beyond, learn from how the entrepreneurial mavericks did it in 2006. In every industry from advertising to e-commerce, there'll surely be some interesting new idea or innovation in this report which will hopefully inspire you to your own breakthrough, radical and never-seen-before business vision.

If you want more, be sure to check out our blog at <http://www.CoolBusinessIdeas.com>. Updated daily with the latest business ideas which we've spotted worldwide, we're sure you'll find it an enjoyable read. Don't forget to share this report with your friends and colleagues; I'm sure you agree that two (or three or even more!) heads are better than one!

Once again, this report is brought to you by CoolBusinessIdeas.com. We hope you enjoy it!

The CoolBusinessIdeas.com team - Marcel, Steven and Yuelin
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NEW! We have a new site: GetEntrepreneurial.com. The new sister-site of CoolBusinessIdeas.com, GetEntrepreneurial.com helps the aspiring entrepreneur (you!) with **small business advice, business tips and info**, and **entrepreneur resources and opportunities**. It's time to leave the fears behind and bring out the entrepreneur in you!

If one day you were to be caught up by the entrepreneurial fire within to start your own business but you do not know how and where to begin, **then this is the place for you**. Whether it is about creating a compelling business plan that investors simply cannot resist or putting together a cost-effective marketing campaign which reaches your target consumers or leveraging on technology to improve the bottom line, **whatever help and info you need for your small business is all here at GetEntrepreneurial.com.**

Visit <http://www.getentrepreneurial.com>!

Advertising

Scented Bus Stops

Arcade Marketing Inc., in tandem with the California Milk Processor Board, is putting up a new type of advertisement at bus stops that emit the smell of chocolate chip cookies.

The ad, which will be placed at five bus stops in downtown San Francisco, utilizes the company's technology called MagniScent®, which disseminates smell via scent-infused adhesives affixed to the inside of the bus shelters and undersides of the benches.



While scent-based advertisements have been used in magazines, it's supposedly a first for outdoor advertising. Though, I swear some fast-food burger joints deliberately pump burger smoke outside just to get me to walk in!

Interesting that the Milk Board would use cookie smell to attract attention to milk.

Source: Strange New Products

Ads by Consumers

Maybe the writers finally ran out of ideas for the MasterCard "Priceless" ads. That's what it looked like earlier this year when they sat an actor down in a chair and had him type out empty spaces, inviting viewers to try filling in the blanks themselves.

Apparently, the ad copywriters were just up with the latest fashion.

This is the moment of in-your-hands consumer advertising -- the kind generated by the masses rather than for the masses. From Emerald Nuts' make-your-own contest to Mozilla FireFox's posting of consumer-produced spots at firefoxflicks.com, the creative directors seem to be handing over the work to us common folk.

There's marketing powerhouse Procter & Gamble, responsible for such memorable ad icons as Folger's Mrs. Olson and "99 and 44/100 % pure" Ivory soap, offering a \$1,000 prize to food-service professionals who can come up with the best pitch for the Dawn Grease Fighting Arsenal used in cafeterias and restaurant kitchens.

All these efforts to encourage consumer-generated marketing may look like a cheap trick to get free ideas, but advertising executives say there's more to it. What's actually happening is the industry is trying to plug into a very connected online audience that has little patience for traditional ads.

Source: Post-Gazette.com

Child's Ad

Buyjake.com is a website set up by a mother who thinks her child is so cute that companies will want to put their logos on his clothing or him for \$100 000 a year. "I will dress in your company's provided apparel (and sport a tattoo!) everywhere I go for the amount of time chosen. Want me to

do a commercial? How about a public appearance? I'll do that too." All advertising must be pre-approved by Mom (nothing distasteful).

A company called perfectpopcorn.com, has actually offered Jake \$350 for a month's worth of wearing their clothing. "Here is what Tim Farina, President & CEO of Javanni Inc. has to say about Baby Jake: In today's creative world of advertising we not only need to know our customers but we need to find creative ways of reaching them to deliver our message.

Source: GUSH magazine

Spacevertising

It seems we're running out of advertising space (or at least good/fresh space) so now companies are eager to increase their market share in space. In 1985, Coca-Cola and Pepsi seized an opportunity to test the viability of carbonated drinks in space. Both companies benefited from the first unofficial taste test in space. Then in 2001 Pizza Hut flew with the Russian Space Agency and became the first to deliver pizza in space. Radio Shack followed with a commercial aboard the International Space Station. It featured a Russian cosmonaut opening a Father's Day present. NASA has been reluctant to participate, but marketers say advertising could help fund scientific research. NASA is currently working with the Bush administration to conduct an evaluation for a commercialization strategy in space.

Source: Trend Hunter

In-game Advertising

High-tech spy Sam Fisher uses a Sony Ericsson phone to snap a picture of terrorists and sends it to home base. Then he reads his mission briefings on his PDA - personal digital assistant - from the same gadget maker.

While Fisher may be fictional hero of Ubisoft's Montreal-made Splinter Cell video game series, the tools he needs to complete his missions are quite real. And this is only the beginning for the fast-growing industry of advertising in video games, as the eyeballs of young men shift from the television to the gaming console.

"Advertisers want to engage audiences in the environments where they are," said Brandon Berger of Ogilvy interactive, which creates in-game ads for client brands.

"Games are not even a phenomenon anymore. It's mainstream. These are major consumers." As video games become increasingly lifelike, so do their ability to imitate the world's ad-cluttered landscapes. And as production costs for major titles can hit \$40 million, some extra cash is highly welcome. And it can only grow from here. Depending who you ask, in-game advertising could be worth up to \$4 billion by 2010, Berger said.

Product placements like Sam Fisher's camera phone is the most popular choice, linking the brand directly with an enjoyable activity.

Source: The Gazette

Fieldvertising



Here's one for Switzerland's airline group Swiss Air, created by Artfield (website in german), a company shaping agricultural land into art but also advertising. Using fields between 50.000 and 100.000 square meters the company can create characters of up to 100meters length while only using natural colors and elements.

Pretty crazy but hey, this works perfectly next to airports where people already see the advertising from far up.

Source: *Brand Infection*

Teleformance

Teleformance is a Pay-Per-Call advertising account management company, and is the only company in the nation devoted solely to this service. Our goal is to connect your business to qualified consumers that are seeking your company's product or service by eliminating the waste of traditional direct response advertising methods. We manage every aspect of the Pay-Per-Call advertising campaign process for your company. Our experienced team will work with you to customize your strategic campaign and distribute your ads across the nation's largest network of search engines and online directories.

Source: *Teleformance*

Hidden Clues

Psstt. KFC wants to share a secret. No, not that secret.

Colonel Sanders' herbs-and-spices recipe for Kentucky Fried Chicken is still safely locked away, but the chain unveiled a new TV ad Thursday that allows viewers to crack a hidden message if they play the spot back slowly on a digital video recorder or VCR. The gimmick is aimed



at countering the rise of technology that enables television viewers to skip past commercials faster than ever before.

"This is taking the exact opposition approach — rewarding viewers for taking the time to engage and be interactive with television," said Tom O'Keefe, an executive at Foote Cone & Belding, the advertising agency that created the spot for KFC Corp.

For those savvy enough to solve the secret, the prize is a coupon for KFC's new, sauce-drenched Buffalo Snacker chicken sandwich. The 99-cent Snacker debuted a year ago and is credited in KFC's earnings rebound.

Source: MSNBC

Coolertising



AquaCell Media, Inc., a subsidiary of AquaCell Technologies, has tapped into the fast-growing out-of-home advertising segment with their patented self-filling water coolers used as in-store "billboards".

AquaCell installs their unlimited-use water coolers free of charge for retailers so that they can offer their customers a refreshing shopping experience while simultaneously giving advertisers a unique way to reach their targeted audience. AquaCell launched its innovative advertising campaign in Duane Reade stores throughout the NY metro area and Rite Aid drugstores nationwide.

"In today's fragmented media advertising arena, it's getting increasingly more difficult to reach out to the consumer in a relevant timeframe of their purchase intent cycle," said Alan Jope, President of Unilever Home & Personal Care U.S. "In a controlled test, AquaCell's

in-store advertising on our largest brand, Dove, revealed a significant sales lift versus same stores without the AquaCell cooler advertising."

"Our advertisers enjoy exclusivity without any diversions from competing ads," said Michael Dougherty, President of AquaCell Media. "As proven by the 34% Dove sales lift, advertising on our patented permanently attached five- gallon bottle and cup holder is a unique and effective way for advertisers to target consumers while they shop."

With approximately 1300 "billboard" water coolers currently in place, AquaCell continues to roll out its program to numerous retailers and expects to expand beyond the pharmacy segment in the near future.

Source: PRNewswire

Megastar Campaign



The spring television and print advertising campaign for Candie's will feature four celebrities: Singer, actress, megastar Hilary Duff; Grammy nominee Ciara; and actresses Michelle Trachtenberg and Samaire Armstrong. This is the first time the brand has enlisted four stars to appear in an advertising campaign. Past Candie's spokespeople include Destiny's Child and Kelly Clarkson. Hilary, Ciara, Michelle, and Samaire are all unique in their talent as well as their style. Mixing the four girls in an advertising campaign was the ideal way to showcase all of Candie's product categories which are available nationwide exclusively at Kohl's Department Stores.

Iconix CEO Neil Cole stated: "Bringing together the hottest young stars of Hollywood in one ad campaign is an excellent way speak to young women, who may identify with one or more of the stars. Kohl's has embraced our brand and we are thrilled with the response to Candie's at Kohl's."

Source: *Yenra*

Amateur is Fine

For decades, wine consumption in the U.S. was hobbled by a lack of understanding of wine combined with lame or confusing marketing and labeling by wine producers, both domestic and international. But as increasingly clever marketers find success with simple, compelling labels -- think Yellow Tail and Marilyn Merlot -- they're discovering another way appeal to the \$10-wine buyer: Make fun of the \$30-and-up buyers. Think about how Rush Limbaugh talks about liberals, and you get the idea.

Brown-Forman (which markets wines such as Jekel, Fetzer, and Bolla) recently jumped into this vat hand-in-hand with Virgin Atlantic Chief Richard Branson in launching Virgin Vines. Starting with two California wines, a Chardonnay and Shiraz, the partnership seeks to promote wine consumption by dissing those who take wine too seriously. The label's pitch goes like this: "Dare to enjoy this wine without dashes of pretentiousness or hints of snootiness. Virgin Vines believes wine should be all about having fun and loving the taste...not waxing poetically about meaningless wine-speak and food pairings."

Source: *BusinessWeek*

The Displax Interactive Window



Displax® projects itself in a transparent, holographic display, with high definition, visible at daylight, captures the customers attention, bonds with the reality of the business of any kind of organization and has customized sizes, which allows its placement in window stores of banks or telecommunications store, with the certainty that, whoever passes by, will not be indifferent to it. It has a great impact!

Displax® - Interactive window will be released in three versions. Displax® Interactive is the solution that allows people to interact with a projected multimedia application, just pressing the display with a finger. Displax® - Network allows managing displays placed in any location of the world, in a remote and central way. Displax® - Show allows you to present, in an innovative way, the products in a display, set in a window-store or inside the shop.

Source: *Displax.com*

For the Rest of Us

Glitzy television advertising, long the mainstay of marketing, fell out of vogue this year on Madison Avenue. In its place: frill-free commercials. Reflecting the proliferation of reality television, agencies embraced ads that used real people or looked like home videos.

Typical of the trend was an ad for Vonage Holdings Corp., the Internet phone service provider, which used a home movie of a skier leaping off a roof onto a pickup truck. A Toyota Motor Corp. spot was filmed to look like a home movie shot by two slacker dudes partying in the desert when a meteor hits their Tacoma truck. Anheuser-Busch Cos. has lately been running Bud Light ads shot documentary-style, which feature a fictional character named Ted Ferguson who performs daredevil stunts and rewards himself with beer.

Source: *WSJ.com*

Page-turn Ads

CNET has recently launched page-turn ad units. It's interactive without being in-your-face like interstitial ads or the ads that take over part of the page. You can browse the pages if you like, or just ignore the ad. And for a retailer I think it's perfect--the Circuit City example is a great showcase for what you can do in this new ad format.

Source: *TechRepublic Blog*

Million Dollar Home Page

These days, one college student in England is changing the world of real estate one pixel at a time. Sound strange? You bet it is and, in fact, it's just strange enough to work. Alex Tew, a 21 year old college student, is on the way to being a millionaire and it's all thanks to the world wide web and the sale of his virtual real estate.

The concept is surprisingly simple. Alex Tew is selling virtual real estate via the internet. No, it's not a house or land, but it is a cool concept. The Million Dollar Homepage offers a spot of advertising on it's virtual real estate, also known as a website, for a fee of \$1.00 per pixel with a 100 pixel minimum. Each purchase of 100 pixels are sold in 10x10 blocks. The goal is to sell one million pixels, which will earn Tew the title of millionaire. After posting his website in August 2005, he's already half way to his goal.

The Million Dollar Homepage is located at <http://www.MillionDollarHomepage.com>.

Source: News Blaze

Pay Per Call Advertising

Pay-per-call is an advertising service that connects online searchers with your business by phone. You place an Internet ad, and Internet surfers who respond to the ad call you on the phone. You pay for the ads similarly to pay-per-click advertising, except you pay per phone call, rather than per click-through. As with any advertising, it is still up to you to convert the lead into a sale.



The image above shows a pay-per-call ad from a search I just ran a few minutes ago for "Cleveland web designer." Similarly, I found listings for "Akron mortgage," "Columbus home builder," "Toledo florist," and "Cincinnati auto repair." You see a listing on the search page, with a telephone number underneath. When you click on the listing, rather than taking you to a website, it takes you instead to a second page with information about the business, its products and services, a telephone number, and business hours to call. It seems like an excellent solution for small businesses, because more small businesses are prepared to deal with a phone call, than with an Internet lead.

Source: Small Business Trends

Carvertising 2.0



We reported on nearly-free short term rental cars in Europe a long time ago; leave it to entrepreneurs and marketers from around the world to add some really interesting twists, turning a new corner in Carvertising. In Austria, CoolCar offers long term (12-48 months) rental cars decked out in ads, including the Mini One and the Citroen C4, for only EUR 199 (USD 249/GBP 135) per month if drivers make enough miles. The lease also includes insurance and service costs, and obviously provides an interesting alternative to buying or leasing a regular car.

In France, Liberty Drive offers a similar long-term rental service, offering Smart cars for EUR 150 per month. But they also have a program that rewards existing Smart car owners for participating in carvertising campaigns, paying these MINIPRENEURS up to EUR 100 per month if they turn their cars into driving billboards. Clients have included Coca Cola Light, Kookai, Evian, Always, Club Med, Schwarzkopf, Gillette, Nike, Samsung, Tele2. Liberty Drive is looking for franchisees in French cities with over 100,000 inhabitants.

Source: [Springwise]

Bluetooth Advertising

Passengers waiting to board a Virgin Atlantic Airways flight at London Heathrow airport may get an unexpected invitation on their cellphone these days.

Under a new advertising program, transmitters are beaming out text messages to the phones of people walking by to ask them if they would like to watch a video-clip ad on their phone's screen. The commercial, aimed at passengers in Virgin's first-class lounge, touts a new SUV, the Range Rover Sport.

Two London companies are behind the new ad approach -- Maiden Group PLC, which has handled billboard advertising for 80 years in the United Kingdom, and Filter UK Ltd., a small firm specializing in the transmitter technology.

Source: [WSJ.com]

Pay-per-Call

Search marketing agency Greenlight has launched a Pay-Per-Call service aimed at UK advertisers. Pay-per-call is billed as an alternative to traditional pay-per-click search advertising.

The advertiser is only required to pay for the adverts that result in phone calls, in much the same way pay-per-click advertising only charges for visitors sent to a website.

Greenlight said the service could open up the search market to thousands of businesses which operate without a website.

Source: [NetImperative]

Get Your Adpack!

Perth-based advertising agency Breakthrough has released an original and innovative ideas generation tool specifically focussed on advertising. The card-based system is designed to assist in concept generation and media selection and is one of the cleverest concepts we've seen to help with brainstorming communications strategies. Adpack is a card-based tool made up of trigger or strategy cards which contain proven techniques that are current and relevant in today's business divided into three sections - Media, Offer and Power Words. Each of these cards can be combined to create powerful marketing ideas.



Adpack is also an educational and lateral thinking tool designed to catalyse the brainstorming process and is an ideal way of including the people who know the business best (the staff) in the process.

Source: [gizmag]

Weather Targeting

Yell.com is launching a suite of seasonal interactive ad campaigns, which target creative to regional weather conditions.

The first wave of creative, running until July, aims to promote Yell.com's range of services and is based on the "great British summer". It will be followed by a new push in autumn.

Expandable skyscraper ads predominantly targeting London's office workers will show maps of the UK displaying the weather in different regions, with a real-time weather feed triggering different creative executions depending on local conditions.

The ads suggest a suitable activity according to the city it is viewed from: a user logging on to www.thisislondon.com on a warm day in the capital will see a "sunny, outdoor" execution. If it is wet, the ad might suggest visitors search its directory for bowling alleys.

The campaign, developed by agency AKQA with media planning from i-level, involves home-page takeovers on Tiscali and Yahoo!, and targets information sites including Trainline, London Eating and Streetmap. Yell.com is aiming at the 20-26 age group through ads on music and entertainment sites including Mean Fiddler, The Raft, Channel 4 and Big Brother, and creative is further tailored to the site it is placed on: users of Property Finder will see an execution tailored to those searching for a house on a hot summer's day.

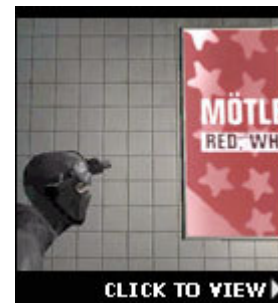
Source: [Revolution Magazine]

Adsense Middlemen

The New York Times: Consider this somewhat strange development: search engines like Google and Yahoo have become so proficient at attracting advertising that even competitors, like newspapers and yellow pages publishers, are now selling ads on their behalf.

Newspapers like The Houston Chronicle, which is owned by the Hearst Corporation, and yellow pages publishers like the BellSouth Corporation and SBC Communications have recently turned themselves into de facto agents for the search engines in the small-business market, where the Internet companies have had limited success.

Businesses like yellow pages publishers, which exist solely to serve the local advertiser that Google and Yahoo covet, may appear to be cutting their own throats by passing those customers onto the search engines. But the publishers argue that they are taking advantage of the chance to make additional money, while also studying the search engines closely enough to determine a long-term strategy to compete with them.



Source: [The New York Times]

Dynamic In-Game Advertising



Be prepared for such moments to become a regular occurrence, thanks to a new service that inserts dynamic ads into video games. After several months of beta testing, New York start-up Massive is set to launch its in-game advertising network on Monday, with support from several major game publishers and mainstream advertisers such as Coca-Cola and Intel.

In-game advertising has become a growing source of revenue for publishers over the past few years, with developers of sports games in particular financing much of their work through product placement fees. Shag a deep fly ball in the latest baseball game, for example, and the outfield fence will probably be emblazoned with paid ads from real companies.

Massive will take advertising to another level by serving up dynamic ads, said Nicholas Longano, chief marketing officer for the Los Angeles-based company. Pass a virtual billboard in the latest "Splinter Cell" counterterrorism game, for example, and it could be hawking soft drinks one day and the latest Vin Diesel movie the next.

Source: [CNet]

It's Online Ads For Small Businesses

"Heat-resistant coatings," "high-temperature adhesives" and "machinable ceramics" aren't even in the same league as "Britney Spears" when it comes to popular Web searches.

But for Aremco Products Inc. of Valley Cottage, N.Y., they're golden.

That's because the customers for Aremco's high-temperature coatings and adhesives are typing those words into search engines such as Yahoo! and Google.

To make sure Aremco's Web site comes up when they do, the company bids from 50 cents to \$3 to be part of the list of "sponsored" links that appear above and to the right of the primary search engine results. Aremco only pays when a potential customer clicks on a link.

Peter Schwartz, president and chief operating officer at Aremco, said he started placing search ads more than a year ago and is spending a couple of thousand dollars a month on the promotion.

"I can't tell you that we get an extra million a year in business, but our order frequency is up 20% to 30%," Schwartz said.

The online ads are taking the place of advertising in an annual industrial directory and dozens of monthly trade magazines for engineers eager to buy adhesives and coatings that can withstand 3,000-degree temperatures for use in hair dryers and halogen headlights.

Source: [USAToday]

Voicevertising

Just when you think you've seen it all in the world of marketing, listen up - **HALLS Fruit Breezers** lets you hear it all too! Tattooing advertisements on body parts is old news, but the newest wave in creative branding is loud and difficult to miss...at least if you live in New York City with Floyd

Hayes. HALLS Fruit Breezers purchased Hayes' voice on eBay, in a unique advertising deal that may leave you...well, hoarse.

Floyd Hayes, a Brooklyn, NY resident, put his "voicevertising" services up for sale on eBay, offering to shout out a brand name every fifteen minutes for an entire week -- no matter what location or situation, i.e. subways, elevators, bars, clubs, weddings or even business meetings. (Don't worry...he will be allowed to sleep.) It's a contemporary spin on the traditional town crier, and what brand could be more fitting to purchase the services than HALLS Fruit Breezers, a throat drop that cools and soothes dry, scratchy throats, which Hayes is likely to experience on this mission.

Source: [PRNewswire]

Tasteless Beer Advertising

No, this is not about buxom bikini-clad women riding Clydesdales or SpongeBob holding a longneck. It's about this ad war between Miller and Anheuser-Busch about whether Lite or Bud Light tastes better, or has "more taste."

The National Advertising Division of the Council of Better Business Bureaus says it is now referring Anheuser-Busch's challenge of Miller Brewing's "More flavor, more taste" claims to the U.S. Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, which already is reviewing the Milwaukee brewer's campaign for fairness and truthfulness.

Miller points to blind taste "perception" tests of 400,000 consumers conducted by the Institute for Perception, Richmond, Va., pitting A-B versus Miller products. A-B charged that the tests were improperly conducted and the ads may leave consumers to think Miller beers were preferred over the AB's brands.

Source: [Businessweek Online]

Agricultural & Environmental

Useful Garbage

Reader Mark Nagurski alerted us to the Ebay of dumped and useless items, [Useful Garbage](#).

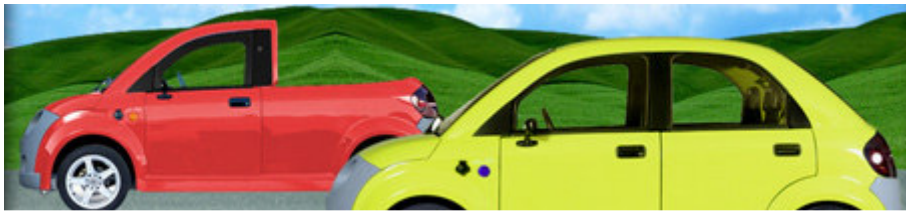
From the website: "Recycle your unwanted clutter or anything you deem as being useless-excluding your Partner! Visitors can 'Dump' anything they want to get rid of - for someone else to 'find' and take off their hands. From antiques and art to cars, TV's and furniture - anything goes for FREE!

Connect with Dumpers and Finders of useful items by logging into MY Account or Registering. When 'Dumping', simply post your photos or a video together with a description of the item. If you cannot do either, just post your description. When you 'Find' an item, ask the dumper further questions or make an offer to obtain the item.

In turn, we all contribute to minimising landfill disposals, street and neighbourhood waste and the item is in the possession of someone who can make the most of it and use it again and again and again!"

Source: [UsefulGarbage.com](#)

Electric Cars



While they might resemble luxe golf carts, this dealership's LSVs (low speed vehicles) offer Austin area residents a new alternative to gas-fueled travel. At 50 cents per charge (power for approximately 40 miles), with a one charge per day frequency, owners spend around \$180 dollars/year to run their cars with a clean, renewable energy source. While this is clearly not an option for many, particularly those who spend hours a day in their cars driving over 35 mph (many LSVs can only be driven on roads with a 35MPH sign posted), it's definitely a step in the right direction.

Source: [\[TrendCentral\]](#)



Organic Levi's

For the first time since it started making trousers for cowboys more than 100 years ago, the famous clothing company is bringing out a pair of "sustainable" jeans to satisfy environmentalists. The cotton is organic, the button on the waistband is made of coconut shell, there are no metal rivets, the dye is from natural compounds include indigo and the label is from recycled cardboard.

As the factory is in Hungary, the cotton will come from Turkey, the nearest available source, and other materials will come from Europe too, to cut down on long distant transport and associated fuel costs.

Not that it will stop the trendy trousers from having a hefty price tag, at least to start off with. According to reports the first pairs in the US will sell for 250 dollars each, around £140 here.

Source: [Daily Mail]

Burning Garbage

A Florida county has grand plans to ditch its dump, generate electricity and help build roads -- all by vaporizing garbage at temperatures hotter than parts of the sun.

The \$425 million facility expected to be built in St. Lucie County will use lightning-like plasma arcs to turn trash into gas and rock-like material. It will be the first such plant in the nation operating on such a massive scale and the largest in the world.

Supporters say the process is cleaner than traditional trash incineration, though skeptics question whether the technology can meet the lofty expectations.

The 100,000-square-foot plant, slated to be operational in two years, is expected to vaporize 3,000 tons of garbage a day. County officials estimate their entire landfill -- 4.3 million tons of trash collected since 1978 -- will be gone in 18 years.

No byproduct will go unused, according to Geoplasma, the Atlanta-based company building and paying for the plant. Synthetic, combustible gas produced in the process will be used to run turbines to create electricity -- about 120 megawatts a day -- that will be sold back to the grid. The facility will operate on about a third of the power it generates, free from outside electricity.

Source: [Wired]

Green Pass

Martin Hughes is not your typical hybrid-driving, clean-energy fanatic. Hughes and his wife, both longtime oil-industry veterans, zoom around Houston in no-compromise vehicles. His, a Nissan Xterra SUV. Hers, a zippy Volkswagen Passat. Yet when Hughes heard last year about an environmental startup called TerraPass Inc., he was intrigued. The Menlo Park (Calif.) company sells "green tags," which cost up to \$80 a year and which are designed to offset the emissions a car spews into the air during that period. After taking a small cut of each sale, TerraPass pools its members' fees and invests them in clean energy production, including wind power. Hughes checked out the service online last August and then forked over \$129 for two TerraPass windshield decals.



TerraPass is channeling the good intentions of individual consumers concerned about carbon emissions, which are linked with global warming. U.S. companies are also adopting the certificates, in part because they wish to cater to this growing, green constituency. But the tags, which are now America's fastest-growing alternative-energy product, aren't simply a marketing vehicle. U.S. businesses have watched Europe and Japan adopt tough regulations on carbon emissions and say the tags could help them prepare for similar developments in the U.S.

Source: [BusinessWeek]

Windsave Saves You Money



Continuing concerns about climate change and skyrocketing energy prices are fuelling interest in alternative sources of energy. One of consumers' major complaints though is the lack of making a real impact: separating bottles and papers only goes so far. Sensing a real opportunity, British/Scottish **Windsave** launched the Windsave 1000 system, a three-bladed fan (1.75 m in diameter) that connects to a building's standard mains supply. The turbine is quiet, with noise levels comparable to the sound of a person talking at normal volume. It produces approximately 1kw of electricity, enough to run a TV, DVD player, computer, fridge/freezer and several lights. Windsave is now partnering with British Gas to market and install roof-top turbines; trials will be carried out in Scotland and South-West England later this year. Engineers from British Gas will supply and install all equipment for GBP 1,500, and it's projected that the turbines will save households up to GBP 100 on their annual electricity bills. With government-funded rebates and subsidies, consumers could earn back their initial investment in less than 6 years.

Source: [TRENDWATCHING.COM]

30 Million Solar Water Heaters

Dusty Dezhou was relegated to the footnotes of Chinese history for centuries, known mainly as the place where a Filipino king died.

Now, Huang Ming hopes hot water will help put it on the map.

His company has earned a fortune manufacturing solar heaters, relatively low-tech rooftop devices which capture the sun's energy to provide water for baths and washing and are at the forefront of a renewable energy drive.

At least 30 million Chinese households now have one and last year the country accounted for around 80 percent of the world market, said Eric Martinot, visiting scholar at Beijing's Tsinghua University. "We are at 15 to 20 percent annual growth and I don't see that slowing down." Huang says his Dezhou-based firm, China Himin Solar Energy Group, is the largest in a fragmented and almost entirely Chinese market, with a share of around 14 percent.

And the mayor is using his heating success as the basis for a bid to follow British University town Oxford and Australia's Adelaide as host of an international solar congress. Cheap and effective enough to make economic sense to middle-class urbanites, Huang's basic models start at around 1,500 yuan (\$190), although for a luxury home this could rise to 18,000 yuan (\$2,250).

With technology so efficient they can work at temperatures well below freezing and under cloudy or smog-choked skies, they soon pay for themselves, he says.

Source: [Reuters]

Muscle Energy



Hybrid Muscle was both a work and exhibition space, built in Chiang Mai in Thailand, that would generate its own electricity and thus be "unplugged" from the power grid.

The engine was driven by the muscle power of an albino Buffalo. The buffalo worked a few hours a day to lift a steel counterweight. Once freed the buffalo would lounge around the rice field and the mechanical energy stored was turned into electrical energy to power ten light bulbs, laptops, mobile phones.

Source: [we make money not art]

DIY Energy Bars

Everyone loves Clif Bar, and recognizes them as one of the more admirable companies out there by just about any measure related to the integrated bottom line. But there's one problem that Clif bar has never been able to solve - packaging. In order to keep Clif Bars fresh, the packaging has to be made out of material that is generally not recyclable nor compostable.

A little start up called Matisse & Jack's seems to have an solution for those people seeking a better packaging solution for their energy bars: They sell the mix to bake them yourself at home. Not only is it better from a sustainability concept, but you can tailor the recipe to your taste, have a bunch of fun, and know exactly what you put into it.

Source: [Triple Pundit]

Clean Gardening

About this time of year green thumb urbanites are struggling to find corners of land, or more realistically window sill space, to grow a few little herbs or vegetables. Garden in a Bag, available at Wishing Fish, makes the process a bit smoother by including all the necessary elements to grow various herbs and even some vegetables. For \$8 per bag you can get organic Basil, Oregano, Italian Parsley, Chives, Lavender, Alpine Strawberry or Mini-Tomato.



Source: [Cool Hunting]

Alpaca Farming



Urban escapists looking for the perfect artisanal farm like the idea of raising animals for fun and profits that don't involve slaughter.

They're cute as heck and they can fetch big bucks: One alpaca stud recently sold for over half a million dollars. Small

wonder alpaca farming is catching on with rurbanites, who love raising the gentle South American creatures and selling their soft, luxuriant fleece.

Handweavers and knitters pay several dollars an ounce for raw alpaca fiber, which is fine enough for wedding gowns and sturdy enough for rugs. To meet rising demand, more knotted-up city dwellers and retirees are joining the padded-foot stampede. The Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association now boasts 4,188 members, up from 626 in 1994, with many of them clustered in the Pacific Northwest (Seattle Times 4.6.05).

Source: [Iconoculture]

The Green Goat

Hybrid cars, trucks and buses have already hit the road. Now, make way for the **Green Goat**, the world's biggest hybrid. It's a 2,000-horsepower locomotive that radically reduces fuel consumption and emissions of pollutants.

The Green Goat is a diesel-electric hybrid in which the normal massive diesel locomotive engine is replaced by a 290-horsepower inline 6-cylinder diesel truck engine and a 600-volt battery bank. The batteries supply the power needed to drive the electric traction motors on the wheels of this 280,000-pound "goat."

Goat is railroad lingo for the smaller locomotives used for moving rail cars around over short distances.

RailPower Technologies, developer of the Green Goat, believes the hybrid locomotive is an ideal way to reduce fuel costs and air pollution in switching yards, said Simon Clarke, executive vice president of the Canadian company. RailPower says the Green Goat uses 40 percent to 60 percent less fuel and emits 80 percent to 90 percent fewer pollutants than conventional train engines.

To build the hybrids, the company strips older locomotives of their engine and cab but keeps the same frame, fuel tank, brakes and electric traction motors. Then it slaps in the long-life lead-acid battery bank. RailPower Technologies says the added weight of the batteries actually helps improve the Green Goat's pulling power, which is rated at 2,000 horsepower -- enough to pull 88 rail cars.

Source: [Wired]



Chocolate Rooms



The deliciously interactive rooms have graced some of England's most elaborate society parties, but Staite's Food Is Art catalog also includes one-offs like plates, tea cups, shot glasses and jewelry.

Playful, whimsical and delicious? Art has never been more enticing. Consumers gravitate toward experiences that challenge and stimulate all their senses.

Food Is Art claims to provoke deep thoughts about our relationship with food, but let's face it – chocolate rooms are more about indulgence, which doesn't come cheaply in this case.

Source: [\[Iconoculture\]](#)

Art

If you need more evidence that art is hot, you need look no further than last week's Art Basel Miami Beach show, which attracted an eclectic mix of collectors, artists and glitterati from all over the world to the already sizzling surroundings of South Beach.

While the visceral appeal of art is always high, it has reached even greater heights now that luxury is back in vogue. And leave it to the Swiss to bring an event to the land of eternal plastic that exemplifies America's chief economical driving force: shopping.



The hot art market is behind the art hotel phenomenon. Here San Francisco artist Tim Gaskin shows off his Hotel Des Arts room.

What other "mall" lets you buy a Picasso for \$13 million? Or has a fleet of BMWs ready to whisk its big-spending clientele to their next high-profile appointment? It's perhaps even more noteworthy that Miami has moved to the forefront of art and entertainment. In March, the Winter Music Conference will occupy the center stage of heat.

Source: [\[Trendsetters\]](#)

Music in the Museum

London's Victoria and Albert Museum has a new exhibition that completely transforms the entire process of visiting a gallery with its innovative sound installations.

The exhibition, 'Shhh... Sounds in Spaces', is unique in that the V&A museum has invited 10 different musicians and artists to provide sound-pieces to accompany the collection of sculpture, furniture and fashion in the different rooms and spaces. The contributors vary from big names like Gillian Wearing and Jeremy Deller, to musicians like Roots Manuva, and David Byrne.

Your journey begins in the museum's Contemporary Space, where visitors collect headphones, a custom-made MP3 player and a map that leads them through the series of sound installations. Infra-red sensors throughout the museum trigger the in-ear soundtracks which vary dramatically from space to space, ranging from large-scale soundscapes to spoken pieces in response to a single art object.

Now that's 'modern' art, isn't it?

Source: [BBC Feature]

Automobiles

Car Broke Down?

Mechanics here in Boston call this a "jump kit." It's a briefcase-sized, 20lb, 12V battery with built-in 12v/120v charger, and with built-in jumper cables attached. The Jump-N-Carry is a much easier way to jump a car; no jockeying the live car to kiss bumpers, no stretching jumper cables between cars. I tend to keep mine in my car, so it's quick & easy to help anyone who needs a jump. A cute trick for a dead alternator is to hook up the jump kit, lay it inside the engine well, close the hood as well as you can, and drive to the shop. One of my mechanics has a J&C with a case that melted from doing this trick, but it still works fine.



Source: [Cool Tools]

Various Fuels on Car

But will it run on empty? In June 2006, Volvo showcased its Multi-Fuel, a vehicle prototype capable of running on gasoline, ethanol, methane, natural gas and Hythane (a trademarked hydrogen-methane blend). The Multi-Fuel earned a gold medal in the emissions category and a silver in the carbon dioxide emissions contest. Five-fuel flexibility is intended to make it easier for consumers to fuel up on locally produced/available energy sources. Gasoline may have new competition, but it's not dead yet. Consumers who want to embrace alternative fuels appreciate vehicles that run on whatever's at hand.



Source: [Iconoculture]

Car Worth By SMS

Dutch CarSpotter also offers consumers price information by sms to guide them through sales and negotiating. Besides year, make and price, CarSpotter sends users details on a vehicle's maximum speed, horsepower and acceleration. Although the service was meant to improve price transparency and the balance of information between dealers and buyers, it turns out that people also use CarSpotter for fun, texting their employer or neighbour's license plate to find out how much their car is worth. CarSpotter also works for motorcycles. CarSpotter valuations are priced at EUR 1.50, and the number to text to is 2020.

Source: [Springwise]

The Kenguru



Made in Hungary, the Kenguru is a small vehicle that drivers can roll into without leaving their wheelchairs.

Designed by Zsolt Varga, Kenguru is small, stylish and cheerful vehicle whose contours are similar to those of a Smart car. But the resemblance stops there. Made to hold one passenger in a manual wheelchair, the Kenguru doesn't have doors or seats. To get in, the driver opens the extra large back hatch and rolls inside while remaining seated in his wheelchair, which automatically locks into place inside the car. A joystick instead of a steering wheel means that drivers with limited arm mobility can comfortably control the vehicle. (Source: Index.) Kengurus are electrically powered, have a range of 40-60 km, and reach speeds of 35-40 km/hour, making them best suited to relatively short commutes. Listed price is HUF 2,790,000 (EUR 10,250 / USD 12,920 / GBP 6,980).

Source: [Springwise]

The New Car Wash

The battle is on to primp your ride.

Facing growing competition from the likes of Home Depot Inc. and Sam's Club, car washes around the country are launching new services aimed at grabbing customers' interest. Some are promising shorter cleaning times and opening plush waiting rooms with Wi-Fi service. Others are pitching Netflix-style discount plans in which customers pay monthly for unlimited washes. Some are even washing the family dog.

The changes are striking in a conservative business long dominated by mom-and-pops and small chains. But technological shifts that have cut labor costs are making the car-wash business more profitable and attracting a number of new and formidable entrants.

At the end of April, Costco Wholesale Corp. opened a test car wash at a Seattle store; Home Depot opened convenience stores with gas stations and car washes earlier this year at two stores in the Nashville, Tenn., area; it hopes to open another location in Atlanta later this year and more down the road. Nine Sam's Club locations now have car washes, and the company, owned by Wal-Mart Stores Inc., anticipates opening more. Wal-Mart already has five Murphy Oil Corp. car washes at its stores. Meanwhile, many gas stations, convenience-store and gas chains like QuikTrip Corp. and even car dealerships have expanded their car-wash operations.

The technological changes include more-powerful drying systems (100-plus horsepower, compared with 30 horsepower previously) that have cut out the need for human dryers at the end. Car washes are also automating payment and finding ways for drivers to load their cars onto the conveyer belts or into the wash without humans helping. Some companies, including Home Depot, have dispensed with the conveyer belt; they clean the car in a garage-like bay that consultants say is cheaper to install and operate, using equipment that adjusts to accommodate vehicles of different sizes.

Source: [StartupJournal.com]



Jiffy-tite Quick-Connect Fluid Fittings

Those of you who actually take your truck down to the tracks on the weekend will certainly appreciate Jiffy-tite® Quick-Connect fluid fittings. Their lightweight, high flow valve technology in the plug and socket assembly automatically interrupts the flow of fluid when disconnected to protect against hazardous gas leaks or potential hot oil spills. Designed by racers for racers, each fitting is tested and proven to have a 100% leak proof seal, even at 200 psi. Offering the best of safety and performance, they are available for most fluid applications: fuel, oil and water, and they look really cool too.

Source: [Truck Blog]

Cars, Many Years From Now

Fine. I'm feeling absolutely fine, because the jet lag has worn off and I'm at the 2005 Tokyo Motor Show. Honda is feeling fine, too. "Fine Technology, Fine Times, Feel FINE!" is its motor show motto. And there's more fine-ness at Toyota, in whose Fine-X you can discover that "Ecology and Emotion meet in a fun-to-drive time in which you can enjoy the joy of steering freely at will". Fine words, indeed.

Specifically, you can enjoy steering the Fine-X nose-first into a parking space then sliding the rear end in to complete the manoeuvre, thanks to four independently steering wheels able to turn

sideways. It's a parkophobic's dream, able also to do an about-face in its own length by steering each wheel through 45 degrees and making the rear wheels rotate in the opposite direction from the front ones.

As you might expect, in a show strong on hybrids and cars powered by electric fuel cells, the Fine-X with its vast gullwing doors and vegetable-matter, CO2-neutral interior features both technologies. And back at Honda we find fuel-cell technology pushed ever further with the long, low, sleek FCX concept, whose "vertical flow" cells are so compact they can fit into the structure's backbone. You can also feed the FCX the hydrogen it needs from Honda's Home Energy Station, which converts natural gas into hydrogen and minimal carbon dioxide.



Source: [The Independent]

Pet Friendly Vehicle

The W.O.W. Concept, which stands for "wonderful openhearted wagon," features a special crate for dogs in the glove apartment to allow owners to interact with their pets on the road. A bigger crate pops up from the floor in the back seat area and can be folded back into the floor when it's not needed. For bigger dogs, there's a special seat belt attached to the floor. The W.O.W comes with removable, washable, rollout flooring and has wide sliding doors to keep dogs happy.



"We created this vehicle from the point of view of a dog, but it turned out to be a gentler vehicle for the elderly, children and other family members," said Honda designer Katsuhito Nakamura.

Source: [Popgadget]

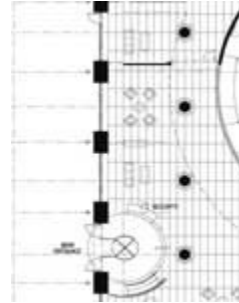
Branding

Workspace Brands

Companies are increasingly coming to terms with the idea that the workspace, is an under-utilized brand asset. There are a couple of interesting recent examples:

Marketing services companies are notoriously bad at marketing themselves and most of the big companies house their employees in cubicle ridden offices that look like insurance companies, but not the strangely named Fahrenheit 212 (A unit of Saatchi), whose workspace has become the brand.

The Fahrenheit 212 logo and the bold signature palette of white, gray and an orange as bright as goldfish are ubiquitous in the 5,030-square-foot, eighth-floor offices, executed by David Howell, principal of David Howell Design.



Source: [Influx Insights]

Linking with Consumers

Over the last few years, though, Mr. Fluevog hasn't just been presenting ideas about shoes and style to customers; he has also been soliciting ideas from them — encouraging brand enthusiasts to submit their own sketches for leather boots, high-heeled dress shoes, even sneakers with flair. He posts the submissions on his company's [Web site](#), invites visitors to vote for their favorites and manufactures and sells the most promising designs. He calls it all "open source footwear."

"Customers want to express themselves, to be involved with the brand," Mr. Fluevog said in an interview at the John Fluevog Shoes boutique on Newbury Street in Boston. "For so long, people would hand me a drawing of their personal design for a shoe or ask if I had considered an idea they liked. This program is a natural outgrowth of that desire for connection."

To date, the company has chosen nearly 300 finalists from the flow of sketches into Vancouver — and introduced 10 shoes based on customer designs.

Source: [NY times]

Sapphire Inspired



So let's start with a slew of what can now be considered 'traditional' pop-up BRAND SPACES, many of them of the fast-fashion type, eager to surprise either random passers-by or those select few who were in the know. Here's a long list of spottings over the last 6 months or so (ammunition!), just copy and paste into your brand presentation you'll give to your boss or, if you yourself are the boss, to your team:

Sapphire Inspired | Last November, Surface Magazine and Bombay Sapphire launched the week long "Sapphire Inspired" pop-up store at the Bathhouse Studios in New York. On sale were limited edition items like a Sapphire inspired martini glass entitled "Broken Martini" by emerging designer Dror Benshetrit, an Ice Chandelier by designer Eva Menz, stunning wallpaper from fashion designer Jonathan Saunders and lounge furniture created by Luisa Ruge. More than 1,000 people visited the store.

Source: [Trendwatching]

Consumer Goods

VO Gloves

Vaughn Outdoor (VO), makers of the CZiP design that frees winter athletes from the inconvenience of taking gloves off at inopportune times, announces the launch of 15 new VO glove and mitten designs with the hands-free access.

To advance the line for the '07 season, VO teamed up with Wendall Tremblay of WTC Consultants for sales, marketing and counsel on VO glove research and development. The product designs were tested by the U.S. Military in Alaska and Afghanistan under extreme weather conditions.

VO gloves also received the Riri Sportswear Accessories Award of the 2006 ISPO BrandNew competition, the world's largest young entrepreneur contest in the sports equipment industry.

Source: [fibre2fashion.com]

Inverted Christmas Trees

Hang a shining star upon the lowest bough -- the world of Christmas trees is being flipped upside-down.

The latest trend in artificial Christmas trees seems to be the "inverted" style, in which the tree is either hung from the ceiling or supported by a weighted base on the floor. Local Christmas vendors are clamoring for the inverted evergreens. College Gardens Christmas Shoppe, 2481 Commercial Blvd., began carrying the "umbrella" and "mushroom" trees this year due to their bizarre appearance and ability to intrigue customers.

"They're very unusual and most people have never seen anything like them," owner Steve DuBois said. "People like the way the ornaments hang and the fact that more presents can be fit under the tree."



Although the shock factor of the holiday trend is attractive, DuBois said, upside-down trees are a hard sale.

"Everybody loves them and are curious about them," he said, "but you don't sell a lot."

Source: [The Daily Collegian Online]

Growing Clothes For Growing Kids



Adjustable-waist pants solve fit issues width-wise, but Mom's only recourse against growth upsursts and dryer-induced shrinkage used to be cuffs or cut-offs. Ziprips represent yet another practical solution from mompreneurs.

Ziprips are a line of stylish adjustable separates that grow up (down, actually) with kids 1 to 6. Pants, skirts, dresses and overalls are designed with inserts that quickly add or remove extra length from hip to hem. Each article comes with a larger insert that keeps Ziprips a perfect fit for up to three sizes.

The adjust-for-growth concept has proven popular with toys and furniture . But like most products, convenience and customization come with a price.

Mix and matchable, Ziprips are anything but basic. Fashion-forward Eurasian designs appeal to hip mamas who already buy unique boutique brands. To strictly price-driven parents, the cost may offset any inherent practicality.

Source: [Iconoculture]

Rapping Paper

Though not quite in production yet, Si Hill Design has been getting a lot of praise for his clever (w)rapping paper that features the instantly recognizable lyrics to popular rap songs. The pun of the gift wrap itself is as funny as it is to read the familiar words in print. The UK-based designer's prototypes include the old school, Sugar Hill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" (pictured left, click for detail), NWA's classic "Straight Outta Compton," the embarrassment of Vanilla Ice's "Ice Ice Baby" and House of Pain's "Jump Around," all in different two-hue colorways.

Source: [Cool Hunting]



Eco- Pots

EcoForm pots are made from by-products of renewable and sustainable crops, namely grain husks and natural binding agents. Under average use and conditions, they'll last five years and are freeze and thaw resistant. Once discarded into a landfill, decomposition will take place.

Combining sustainability with eco-chic, the pots have a smooth finish and come in a variety of shapes and natural colours, in both decorative and grower lines. The products were developed by Sweetwater Nurseries in cooperation with an Asian manufacturing partner. EcoForm is currently only available on the West Coast of the United States, sold at nurseries and green-minded retailers such as Whole Foods.



Source: [Springwise]

Motorola Vending Machine



Forget pushy sales clerks or waiting for online orders. Instead, opt for robotic arms. Motorola is rolling out Instantmoto vending machines that will sell cellphones and other celly stuff at malls and airports across the country.

Like Staples' vending machine effort, Motorola's robot retail stores are to be placed in high-traffic areas. Motorola's hoping their anytime convenience will draw travelers and other off-hours shoppers.

Finding cellphone chargers and replacing must-have celly accessories on the road? Brutal. When it comes to telecom needs, travelers crave access and convenience – not mad scrambles to closed electronics stores.

For consumers who know what they want, salespeople just get in the way. No-lag, 24-7 access is key for consumers who want to buy, not shop.

Source:[Iconoculture]

Laundry Packs

Cotton Buds Inc. has been granted an exclusive license from P&G to produce, market and distribute Tide Liquid Detergent Travel Sink Packets. The new product offers consumers their favorite laundry detergent in single-use "sink" packets, making laundering a few items by hand simple and convenient when traveling.

This is the latest in a growing number of external business agreements struck by Cincinnati-based P&G. The deals are designed to combine P&G's trademarks, technology and/or know-how with strong outside companies to drive innovation and deliver mutually positive business results.

Source: [Brand Noise]



Happy Birthday Beans



Greeting cards are so passé. E-cards? Totally tacky. Singing telegrams work only in the movies, and skywriting is bad for the environment. How in the world are you supposed to get your message across?

Well, we're spilling the beans. The style-setting Japanese have done it again, creating the perfect vehicle for all your well wishes: [the message bean](#).

Housed in an adorable aluminum can, each already planted bean is laser-printed with a message (Thank You, Love, Good Luck, or Happy Birthday) and a complementary image (the Japanese character for thanks, a heart, four-leaf clover, or music note). The recipient simply peels off the foil top, adds water to the soil, and voilà! A week later the bean sprouts and the message is revealed.

Source: [DailyCandy]

Life Bank

TakaraTomy have come up with another great, wacky product in the Life Bank (Jinsei Ginkou), the riff on the coin bank that the 21st century has been waiting for. The Bank's screen shows you the life of a stick man who starts out as a poor pleb in a cupboard-sized apartment and develops into a rich bastard lounging under a chandelier on the 500 yen coins you feed him, all the while counting you down to your up-to-Y100,000 savings target. Then you open up the box and find he actually has spent all your money on 8-bit hos and lo-rez champagne.



Source: [dottocomu]

Plastic Cool, for Gals



Going for office sophisticate? Look the part in a sensible pantsuit and pumps. But lose the fake glasses and bun. (That's more porn librarian.)

If you really want to work it like Career Woman Barbie, you'll need plastic accessories. Like **Plastic People's laptop cases**. Custom made of vinyl, they look plastic (hence the name). They're functional, with a half-inch of safety padding, two external pockets, and an interior sleeve. But they're so bright, cheery, and whimsical that you'll feel like you're carrying Sweet Valley High and magic markers instead of the McClarin file and your overdue bills.

The cases have small hearts on the front and come in a mishmash of pick-it-yourself colors. You can stick with the conservative black-on-beige (investment banker) or the splashier red-on-yellow combo (freelancer/unemployed).

Source: [DailyCandy]

Kids Soap

A new product called, "SquidSoap" is designed to teach kids good habits in washing their hands thoroughly.

When you push down on SquidSoap's dispenser, it shoots a small amount of black ink with the soap. You're supposed to keep washing your hands until you remove all the black ink. It takes about 15 to 20 seconds to get everything off.

The company that makes this, Squidsoap, LP, out of Wichita Falls, TX, claims it's also a toy, because the



orange-colored squid tentacles that adorn the bottle is stretchable, providing kids with hours of fun.

Imagine, kids having fun with handsoap.

Source: [Strange New Product]

Trash Without Pest

Terry Feinberg was seeing red. "I can't [count] how many times I went outside and found my garbage ripped apart in the street," Feinberg says. He was tired of having pests and animals snooping around his garbage bags, so he decided to come up with a new type of bag that would discour-age them by both scent and color.

Feinberg, the owner of a health-care and beauty product distribution company, began researching his product three years ago. He asked a chemist friend to help him create a scent offensive to animals and insects but pleasant to humans.

Feinberg is currently testing his Repellem Garbage Bags, which sell for about \$13 to \$15 per box, in more than 100 Petco stores and is negotiating to have his product appear on QVC. He predicts 2006 sales will be between \$1 million and \$2 million.

Source [Entrepreneur.com]

Tracking Time

You don't smoke. You avoid the sun. Your bathroom cabinet is heaving with all sorts of antiaging creams. You're waging a war against time. And it shows.

But when it comes to the contents of your fridge, you've given up on the battle of the dates. It's a time warp inside there — 2-month-old eggs alongside 2-year-old blueberry jam. Next time you open a jar, bottle, or package, stick a Timestrip on it. Once it's activated, the genius product counts down to expiration. So not only will you avoid finding a thick layer of furry mold inside the mayo jar, but you'll be able to spot the stinky culprit without using your nose. The Timestrip also works on bottles of medicine, cleaning products, and vitamins, quietly keeping track of the ticking on your behalf.



Source: [DailyCandy]

Wrist Bottle



A company called HydroSport is marketing a new water bottle that fits on your wrist.

Described as a "Wrist Water Bottle", each unit holds 5.5oz of water or sports drink, for a total of 11oz when you have one on each wrist. When fully loaded, the unique bottle weighs one-half pound, providing you with some additional exercise.

The company claims its also helps keep your body temperature cool.

At \$9.99 each, they're available in a variety of colors, and even come in kids sizes. The company will even offer to put your logo on them.

Source: [Strange New Products]

Neat Nets



Forget those plain-Jane plastic bags for storing your child's toys. Now, there's an easy and practical way to store everything from building blocks to action figures.

Neat Nets by Parents of Invention are colorful, mesh bags for keeping toys -- or most anything else -- orderly and visible. They are easy to stack and see through, so you can always find what you're looking for. There are three different colors in each package. Cost is \$9.99. Visit parentsofinvention.com.

Source: [Orlando Sentinel]

Foot Technology



Walkers are standing up and taking note of [Masai Barefoot Technology \(MBT\)](#) trainers. Based on the erect barefoot stride of Africa's Masai tribe, the chunky-soled shoes create a rocking motion that improves posture and balance.

Aesthetically, these shoes look more orthopedic than Orvis (although with the popularity of things like CROCS, who are we to judge?), but they promise to turn shuffling along into a core workout.

The MBT style range includes nursing clogs, sandals, hiking boots and running shoes. But rocking out doesn't come cheap: They cost \$245 to \$265 a pair.

Source: [Iconoculture]

Body Cooler®

The hot summer months are fast approaching, and Body Cooler® has a way to keep people cool and healthy in the heat. The subsidiary of Akemi Inc. has recently completed a complete overhaul of their website and re-launched www.bodycooler.com under the umbrella of Yahoo Small Business. Now, through the safety and security of Yahoo, online customers can purchase the specially designed polymer-based cooling product that rests on your neck, head, or shoulders to protect you from the dangers of heat exhaustion.

Each Body Cooler® is designed to be worn on a specific part of the body and is made in sections so the polymer will stay in place. Each piece is activated by soaking it in cool water. The special cooling polymers will soak up the cool water and expand to about 1" in thickness. You may then place the creatively designed Body Cooler® securely around your neck, cooling your neck and spinal area, on your head, or even over your entire torso, thanks to the wide variety of Body Cooler® style and sizes available. The popular vest that cools the entire upper body is only 2-3 pounds in weight and can comfortably keep the body cool for hours.

Source: [PRWeb]

Diaper Bags



Sure, you can just use plastic ziplock bags to organize your stuff, but I'm a sucker for nice packaging and feel a bit guilty every time I throw a ziplock away, no matter how often I try and reuse them. These attractive ziplock pouches are made from 100% cotton with mesh backing so you can see the contents at a glance. Yeah, I realize that dirty, spoiled baby clothes and messy foods are better off in a plastic ziplock, but these ARE machine washable...like I said, I'm a sucker for packaging.

Source: [BabyGadget]

iPod Bag

The Burton Solar Amp Pack is designed to compliment your iPod. It has an integrated Apple iPod control system with a SOFTswitch control pad on the shoulder strap. It also has a molded iPod storage pocket, a shoulder strap headphone port, padded and ergonomic shoulder straps, and it even has a side-entry compartment to store your laptop. The Burton Solar Amp pack retails for \$299.95. We would almost consider getting this if it was available in other colors besides "natural hemp," which looks like it will pick up plenty of natural dirt.

Source: [Chip Chick]

Potty Bench

Boon, makers of the fun and practical Frog Pod, have just come out with their latest invention, the Potty Bench. And like their first release, this unique training potty manages to combine modern style and ergonomic features at an affordable price.

The bright green Potty Bench has two enclosed side storage spaces for organizing training supplies, and a pullout drawer for easy, sanitary cleanup. Just close the lid and presto – you've got a sturdy sink stool or mini-seat to sit on while the kids are in the bath. The sleek design includes a built-in toilet paper holder and a removable soft deflector shield for training boys.



Source: [UrbanBaby Daily]



Teddy Bear Cracker

Step away from the limousine, or I'll shoot you with this ... teddy bear? The Teddy Bear Gun capitalizes on a cutesy trend in Japan where wedding guests throw teddy bears at wedding receptions instead of rice or bouquets.

If teddy bear throwing sounds like a lot of work to you, here it's made easy with a simple touch of a button. Pull the trigger and the tiny plush bear is catapulted into the air, and once airborne, it'll float safely back to earth thanks to its tiny parachute.

Made by paintball gun manufacturer Sunamiya, the party crackers will go on sale this month.

Source: [Gizmodo]

Gifts of Experiences

In recent years, research shows consumers are looking for gifts that are unique--not your run-of-the-mill department-store gift cards. As one of the first companies to catch on to this trend, Xperience Days lets customers give an opportunity of a lifetime as a gift. The average cost of the gift certificates is \$275 to \$300--prices range from \$65 for a trapeze lesson to \$110,000 for a private zero-gravity flight.

The concept of giving experiences, which is common in the United Kingdom, was an idea that UK native Bishop, 37, and his co-founders, Michelle Geib, 29, and Robb Young, 34, knew would be a

hit in the States. They were right—since the company's launch, at least three competitors have entered the market. "People in the U.S. generally have an adventurous streak and are willing to try things," says Bishop, who met his co-founders while attending business school in South Africa. "Plus, they're very good gift-givers."

Source: [Entrepreneur]

Give Ordinary Products a New Life

A stapler that staples up to 60 pages with even the lightest touch of a pinkie finger, a transparent tea tin lid that keeps out damaging UV light, a diaper bag that's runway-ready—they all point to one trend: In even the most seemingly ordinary product categories, there's room for extraordinary design innovation.

"I looked at the stapler market and [saw that] there hadn't been any functional changes in over 100 years," says Todd Moses, founder of Newtown, Pennsylvania, office products company **Accentra Inc.** Moses' core product, the PaperPro, packs the power of a staple gun into an otherwise traditional, nonelectric, sleek-looking line of staplers.

"When my wife and I became parents, we entered a parallel universe of really bad brands," says Steve, co-founder of **Fleurville**, a maker of high-end diaper totes. "People having babies now are very different from what [new parents] used to be. But typically, there's an assumption that the kid is buying the products." In other words, cartoon characters and fuzzy bunnies might appeal to youngsters, but it's adults who have to carry the diaper bags—and the Granvilles had a hunch that something fashionable would be a hit. They were right.

For Michael Cramer, founder of Adagio Teas, making his gourmet tea products stand out comes down to design details such as a bottom-dispensing teapot that simplifies preparation of loose teas; transparent, UV-blocking lids on tea tins to give customers a glimpse of the product prior to purchasing it; and pyramid-shaped tea bags that combine the taste of loose tea with the convenience of a disposable bag. The company—which sells primarily through its website (www.adagio.com)—relies heavily on product design to attract and reel in customers.

Source: [Entrepreneur.com]

Stylish Laptop Bags



It's a common problem for stylish women on the go—they have the cute outfit, the cute luggage...and the not-so-cute laptop bag. UpTown Bella ends this dilemma with a collection of laptop bags that combine fashion and functionality. Now savvy career women can tote their laptop, cell phones, gadgets, iPod, ID, and boarding pass with ease and style. Every UpTown Bella bag is well-thought out, with functional pockets and compartments to hold everything imaginable—from a BlackBerry to cosmetics.

UpTown Bella solves the travel problem of juggling your laptop, boarding pass, cell phone, and ID when going through airport check-in. While most laptop bags sacrifice either style or functionality, UpTown Bella is a collection of stylish, luxurious and multifunctional laptop bags for female executives who want it all. The creator, Gabby Chan, is a business woman who saw the need when her and her style-conscious friends couldn't find laptop bags that were practical for business yet agreed with their fashion sense. Every UpTown Bella bag must meet their strict criteria: it needs to look good; it needs to be multifunctional and designed for everyday use; it needs to make airport security a breeze; and it needs to have practical features.

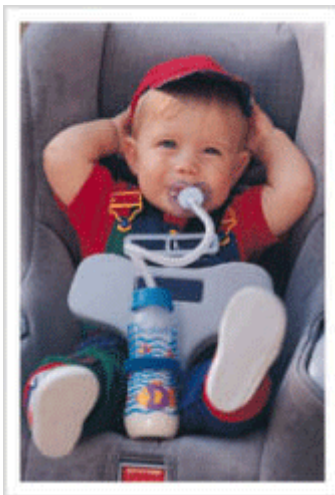
Source: [UpTownBella]

PetPocket

A front pack for a furry baby? The PetPocket straps to a pet owner's shoulders just like a baby pack, to tote Mr. or Ms. Fluffball wherever their adventures take them. For owners who can't get enough face time with their furkids, it brings critters a lot closer to their heart than a carrier or a handbag.

On-the-go pet owners who want to keep their furkids close and comforted like carry-along help, especially in a stylish leopard print. In the ever-expanding pets-as-people realm, there's no shame in overpampering or anthropomorphizing.

Source: [Iconoculture]



Pacifeeder

Hands-free bottle feeding on the go? Ah, the odd joys of the Pacifeeder. One blogger described the no-hands bottle that attaches to tots via a pacifier-like feeding tube as a beer hat for the diaper set. Sure, the oddball gadget has a Simpsons-like quality about it. But seriously, the Pacifeeder has its place: Think multiple baby mouths to feed and only two arms. Or strolling with a feeding tot without having to continually stop to pick up a dropped bottle.

Source: [Iconoculture]

Dirt Drain

Construction & Maintenance: One of life's constant struggles - keeping carpets, rugs and floors clean - may now be a thing of the past thanks to an innovative new floor mat system that keeps the dirt outside. Contractor Thomas Foote has invented a flush mounted grate, one that allowed dirt and mud to drop through the industrial strength grid, and onto the ground below. The new device is designed to fit between standard joists of 12", 16" and 24". Homebuilders are seizing on the opportunity to spec the Dirt Drain as a new 'smart home' feature.

The cutout opening also provides side benefits such as additional air circulation under the decking and added lighting through basement windows. If customers don't need an even flush mounting, the Dirt Drain can also be framed with standard lumber in a matter of minutes.

Source: [Construction & Maintenance]



Puzzling Alarm Clock

The New York Times Sunday crossword? Sudoku? Rubik's cube? Pfft. You can solve those suckers in your sleep.

Which may explain why you always need just five (okay, twenty) more minutes in bed.

If your propensity to hit the snooze button is the only thing keeping you down, check out the Puzzle Alarm Clock. When it's time to get up, this good-morning messenger not only starts the requisite racket, but it also shoots off four colorful puzzle pieces from its top. The only way to bring back silence is to put everything back where it belongs.



Source:[DailyCandy]

Fool-a-Fish

The days of baiting hooks with squirmy worms to catch fish may be over. A new product called Fool-a-Fish may make catching fish easier.

Fool-a-Fish works like this: spray the product (which contains titanium dioxide) on the lure and when it's cast into the water, it lights up like a disco ball luring fish from over a half a mile away. The product was invented by Milan Jeckle, a physician in Spokane, who combined his love of fishing with his love of chemistry to make the product. "You catch three or four times more fish, and the biggest fish," Jeckle contended.

As researchers have discovered, fish see a fourth color in the ultraviolet range, which shows up as a white glow and is invisible to the human eye. The Fool-A-Fish liquid will stay on the lure for two hours, is nontoxic and odorless.

Source: [All Headline News]

Culture & Music

MOG

Myspace started out as a tool for emerging LA bands to connect and build out their fan base. The genesis of this brand was in music, but years later, music still has an important aspect of the site, but its role has been diminished somewhat.

So what fills the void for the music fan?

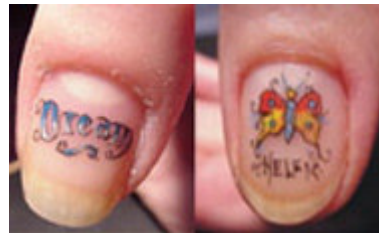
Mog.com is a potential candidate. It's a music based blogging network. Users blog about music and connect to others who share similar tastes and interests. Mog says it helps you create pages that are an "extension of your musical soul".

The smart thing about Mog is that it recognizes that the best way to recommend other music to you is not with an algorithm, but other people, so Mog matches you up with others that it believes can help you discover new music.

Source: [Influx Insights]

The Nail Tattoo

For London women tired of manicures every week or expensive and time consuming nail regimens, the latest and greatest is the nail tattoo. Using a super fine needle, the tattoo artist goes through the first few layers of your nail to create an extremely detailed image directly onto the nail. Fans are loving the intricate, as well as the thrill of doing something a little different that is not permanent---as the nail grows out, so does the tattoo. Although we have not yet seen this trend here in the US, we know that hip Londoners are going to New Wave Tattoo in Muswell Hill, London.



Source: [TrendCentral]

Nike+iPod



Two of the biggest brands in the world came together today in New York to announce a partnership for a new product. Nike and Apple - who wasn't content just with opening a store on 5th Avenue - announced the Nike+iPod - a wireless system that can track your running progress and allow you to choose a "PoweSong" to pump you up when you hit a wall. The sensor fits into a special compartment under the insole and a receiver attaches to the iPod (which only works for the Nano). With the sensor, a voice can tell you what your progress is through the headphones with the touch of a button. Nike is rolling out several new Nike+ shoes in the fall, with the Air Zoom Moire as the first in the Nike+ line. There's also a pretty spiffy Nike+ website where you can track your run history and set up competitions with your friends.

Source: [Gothamist]

Design

Powder Seat

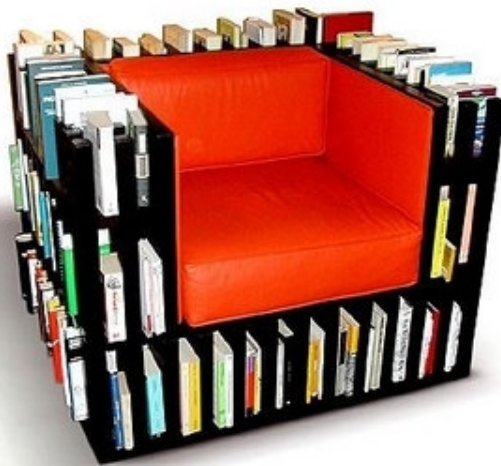
Vitamin Living's The Powder Seat allows you to use your snowboard as the seat of the bench. The board attaches to the legs of the seat via suckers to keep the board protected. It can also be flat-packed for easy storage.



It is also a great way to display your board all the year round, not to mention a space-saving way to store it during off-season. The Powder Seat is simply a base that suckers onto the underside of the board making it into a sturdy seat. There are two different base designs available, the Trident, with two sleek metal tripod legs (pictured), or the Blade, which is a streamlined single metal structure. £99 from Vitamin Living.

Source: [CoolHunting]

Convenient Reading Chair



The Bibliochoise is book storage with a difference. Apart from the fact that it has a higher than average creativity quotient, the Italian designers, nobody&co have thrown in an added utility factor by creating a literal "arm-chair library." With the Bibliochoise, you can pick off your books right from where you are seated. Because this chair-cum-library is designed to hold 5 linear metres of books and a book-lover as well.

Personally, the fact that I can access my books from my chair is, in and of itself, less appealing to me than what the Bibliochoise has to offer in the art department. With looks that can be customized too (you can choose different combinations of wood for the chair and colors for the cushions), this chair will definitely stand out in your living room.

Source: [Popgadget]

Food Design



Minale Maeda's "Table Manners Collection" is a clever exploration of the intersection of formal dining and fast food. Toasted directly onto a grilled sandwich, the porcelain pattern lends the refinement of fine china to eating on-the-go. Other works by Mario Minale and Kuniko Maeda, the duo behind this Rotterdam-based design studio, include t-shirts printed with a tablecloth pattern—for those of us who would rather eat topless than on an undressed table—and delicately embroidered paper napkins.

Source: [Cool Hunting]

Furoshiki Style



The "furoshiki shiki" (furoshiki style) is made out of one sheet of semi-transparent vinyl "film." This sheet is turned into a bag by folding it and making use of the adhesive qualities of the material. It is a practical material: easy to clean and when washed with soap the material regains its adhesive qualities.

The transparency of the material allows you to play with color combinations, resulting in different degrees of transparency. The bag can easily transform into its original sheet-shape changing its function. For instance, it can be used as a sheet to sit on (during hanabi/hanami), or its contents can be laid out on the sheet.

Source: [Compact Impact]

Cool Dental



Who would have thought a dental clinic could be this cool? The 10,180-square-foot clinic (called KU64 after its Kurfürstendamm address) is located in Berlin and was designed by the hot firm, GRAFT, the same people that were behind Berlin's new super lifestyle Hotel "Q".

The incredible design makes you feel like you're in an A-list Hollywood members bar - certainly not the usual ambiance associated with utilitarian spaces like this one which houses eight dentists. The cocoon like spaces are filled with light, creating an elegant sense of flow and space. It makes even a session of root canal seem inviting.

Source: [The Cool Hunter]

Fruitree

Fruitree is a concept piece designed by Chia Shee Loh, Antonietta Fortunato and Elena Godenzi. They were motivated to solve the out of sight, out of mind problem with fruit that goes uneaten and spoils. The fact that fruit grows on trees does not go unnoticed in this design, where the results are both decorative and literal. Circulating air is pushed throughout the Fruitree, keeping the fruit fresh longer.

Source: [Cool Hunting]



Upgraded Office Wares



Offering an alternative to boring office supplies, russell+hazel sells stylish binders, paper, storage and accessories.

Minneapolis-based russell+hazel, founded by a former architect, is a range of aesthetically pleasing office supplies that combine a designed look with durable quality. The company's newest range, Audrey, is a fashion-forward selection specifically tailored to women, offering 'working girl chic' supplies with details inspired by vintage architecture, classic Hollywood and contemporary couture.

Source: [Springwise]

Dining On Computer



Designer Duck Young Kong has shown his latest innovation over at Yanko Design and it's called The Keyboard Food Tray. No longer do you have to face tough question: "one more round of de_dust or finally eat something for the first time in 37 hours?" You can very easily consume your tea cakes and earl grey while grinding goblins.

It's still in the design phase, so there is no pricing and information is limited. Hopefully this will help out all the Koreans who die due to MMOs problem.

Source: [Ohgizmo]

Novelty Lights

Novelty Lights Inc. is a Colorado based company owned by brothers, Tres and K.C. Coors. The company was established in 1999 as a direct importer of Rope Light, Holiday Lights, and a variety of popular novelty lights. Our lighting lines have grown significantly since then; however, we pride ourselves on knowing our customers and their needs and most importantly providing excellent service. Because the owners have years of experience working within the lighting field, even before starting their own company, you can trust the quality of our products and the information you receive. Novelty Lights Inc. strives for excellence in every aspect of our company, and we promise to provide knowledgeable salespeople, accurate information regarding products, and answers to your lighting questions, as well as outstanding and friendly customer service.



At Novelty Lights, we constantly import the finest lighting from all over the world. Because we import merchandise we are able to pass great savings on to our customers. Without the inflated prices offered by other websites and mall stores, we have the buying power to negotiate low prices and value our ability to pass the savings on to you. We strive for complete customer satisfaction and value your right to a fair price and quality lighting products.

Source: [Novelty Lights.com]

High Above

Like a growing number of homeowners paying extra attention to the space over their heads, Cronin likes to incorporate the ceilings into his room design. "It's the biggest space you have to work with," says Cronin, who designs sound studios. Cronin's not the only one with an overhead fixation.

"Ceilings are huge," says decorative painter Kathy Wear, whose work with interior designer Joni Wohlfahrt has won home show awards in the Nashville area. "For so long, ceilings were just white. Now you very rarely see white ceilings. It started with color and has worked its way to finishings."

Designer Marcia Knight says fancy ceilings aren't entirely new. The Biltmore, the Vanderbilt homestead in Asheville, N.C., built in 1895, has many fabulous ceilings, she points out. But what is relatively new is outfitting ceilings atop really tall walls, which can tower 18 to 24 feet in some of the grandest new homes. In terms of aesthetics, it's almost necessary.



"If you have walls that go straight up, you don't want to go to a flat top," she says. "It would be pretty boring."

"People want something unique," Wear says. "They don't want to go crazy on walls, which can overpower a room. They'd rather concentrate on the ceiling as the main focal point."

Source: [INDYSTAR.com]

Retro Refrigerators



If your crib is getting to be a little bit too modern-looking, now it's time to funk it up a bit with some retro-refrigeration. Oddly-named Brit company Smeg is offering these old-fashioned refrigerators with a large selection of colors including those seen above. So if you're looking to sing the praises of the Union Jack or want a refrigerator to match that pink Razr you just picked up, perhaps you've just found something that's chillin' enough.

Source: [\[Gizmodo\]](#)

High-end Latino Furnishings

South Bronx furniture manufacturing and design company Caoba Colección de Muebles creates high-end furnishings with a Latino flair. Run by two Dominican brothers passionate about interior design and la cultura, the company creates coffee tables, chairs, lamps, sofas, dressers and ottomans priced from \$700 to \$1,400. All pieces have Latino names derived from the brothers' relatives, friends and others: the Serrano Dresser, the Manrique Ottoman. Customers include Starwood Hotels, the East Hampton Golf Club and the British Embassy in Washington, DC. Visionary Latinos are turning their passions into businesses that break new ground in industries that traditionally have lacked Latino-owned companies.



Source: [\[Iconoculture\]](#)

The Flying Carpet



Digital imaging offers the ability to create fantastic images and use them in new ways by creating spaces to transform perceptions and indeed create whole new environments.

We now have the ability to put any image on a wall (via digitally printed wallpaper), curtains, ceilings and now to have digitally imaged carpet created, giving us complete artistic control of interior design like never before.

When we first saw the remarkable work of Iranian artist Seyed Alavi we were transfixed in that he offers perspectives we'd not seen before and for each person, those perspectives were different. Alavi's latest project is indeed likely to inspire a myriad of ideas from creatives all over the world when they see how he had an aerial view of the Sacramento River woven into a carpet for the floor of a pedestrian bridge connecting the Sacramento International Airport terminal to the parking garage. It is indeed, a "flying carpet".

Source: [\[Gizmag\]](#)

E-commerce

Buddy Shop



A new e-commerce site called Buddy Shopping that lets consumers peruse products online simultaneously with friends launched today with the promise to offer a viable new channel for Web shop owners.

Though there are features specific to the site that e-tailers can take advantage of — which we'll cover after we explain how the site works — most online shop owners won't have to do a thing to be included in the Buddy Shopping service. That's because consumers are searching online the way they regularly do, so any marketing efforts, such as organic or paid search, will still lead them to you. The difference is that they are able to do so with others in real-time.

The site, dubbed a "social netshopping" service by CEO Todd Kelly, combines e-commerce, social networking, instant messaging and the sharing of merchandise.

Source: [E-commerce Guide]

Demand and Supply

Influx has written in the past about variable pricing models and how these might one day become a key component of business, we have now found an interesting example in a new music site called Amie Street.

This independent music site uses demand-driven pricing; where the community dictates the pricing of the tracks. All tracks start out at zero and can rise to 98 cents depending on sales.



The site encourages community members to recommend and find music and gives back 70% of the proceeds to artists after the first \$5 in sales.

Amie Street have some smart technology that prevents artificial inflation, but openly encourage musicians to mobilize their fan bases to use the site and buy the tracks.

Source: [Influx Insights]

Instant Web 2.0 Websites

SiteKreator was designed to help businesses accelerate brand recognition, build customer loyalty, and increase sales by giving them a one-stop solution to easily create stylish, interactive, and effective Web sites. SiteKreator is a fully-hosted online application that eliminates the need to download, install, or upgrade software.

Prior to SK Business Edition, customers would either hire a designer or agency, use generic tools for site design and/or blogging, or use software to help build their sites. SiteKreator pulls together the best of the Web's most important features and capabilities, without the high price tag or forcing a "generic" design. Unlike Google Pages and other do-it-yourself site design tools, SiteKreator is Web 2.0 ready, enabling businesses to easily implement interactive features, such as blogs, Web forms, and discussion forums, to engage visitors and convert them into repeat customers. Web site information can be tiered through multiple content layers by adding members-only areas and registration forms to encourage visitors to share key information in exchange for access to deeper layers of meaningful content.



Source: [SiteKreator]



Extraordinary Etsy

Click. Scroll. Click. Scroll. Click. Scroll.
Whoa, shopping online is, like, totally wild!
Or — not so much. Which is why we are stoked to introduce you to Etsy, a new, experimental, and totally awesome website that challenges the norms of online shopping.

Run by a group of computer whiz kids, the site offers indie designers the space to showcase and sell their handmade work (kind of like an eBay for crafty types). It's easy and cheap to post any creation (craft supplies, clothing, geekery, vintage gear, edibles). But it's even easier and more fun to shop.

You see, the beautifully designed Etsy utilizes technology that lets you search not just by category or top sellers but also by color (just click any of the virtual swatches) and geography (you can finally find out what's being made in Scottsbluff, Nebraska). You can even look at stuff via time machine or in 3-D (explore for yourself.)

Later this month, they'll be employing multiuser shopping, which allows you to you invite friends to browse along with you in real time. You get to see each other's cursors move across the page as you search and click. Discuss/fight over finds without a phone, e-mail, or IM.

Source: [DailyCandy]

Education

Fly PenTop Education

The Fly PenTop Computer is the latest LeapFrog Enterprises product for 8 -13 year-olds. This is the same company that brought us the Leapster hand-held gaming and learning tool. However, this is no simple pen -- or paper. The pen, slightly larger than an ordinary Bic, is also a talking computer.

The paper is, well, almost magic.

Get this. Take the Fly Pen, draw the numbers zero through 9 plus the appropriate symbols, and presto -- a calculator. Way cool! The creators of this product have made interactive teaching fun. To underline the point, let's talk about the Spelling module. This comes with grade-specific words for the user. In this case, we're looking at the Grade 4 level. We'll pick a selection of words, use the Fly Pen and write them on the paper provided. This is done by using the pen as a basic writing tool, but also as a computer-generated teacher. Tap the paper with the ink end and it tells you the instructions to follow.

Source: [The StarPhoenix]

Green Info

DailyCandy with content that's totally green? That would be Ideal Bite, a daily publishing website with an eco-friendly hue that intends to be "a good source of advice for real people leading busy lives."



Like the Lazy Environmentalist radio show and other down-to-earth approaches, Ideal Bite recognizes that people don't turn green overnight, they do it one shade at a time.

Everyday information for being a more conscientious consumer resonates with people who don't have time, energy or money to do the research themselves.

Source: [Iconoculture]

Cool-Riculum

Eighty-nine percent of parents believe that it is important for their child to be involved in hands-on activities outside of the classroom. To help parents meet these needs, The Scholastic Store, located in SoHo and Scarsdale, has created Cool-riculum, a series of fun and enrichment workshops for kids.

Cool-riculum was designed to provide children with enrichment in their daily skills such as literacy, creativity, and independent thinking. It is also a great way for kids and parents to participate in group activities and socialize with friends.

Entertainment

Video Production On Youtube

Entrepreneurial young South Florida Latinos post their creative homemade videos on YouTube.com.

Four Latino twentysomething friends starred in a video they produced on the cheap called "Cuban Churro Salesmen," a comedy which became YouTube's second-most-watched comedy video within 24 hours of its appearance on the website.



The friends' company, Four Awesome Guys Studios, has filmed seven improvised shorts. The next step: write a script and improve production techniques.

The Internet provides a forum for talented Latino filmmakers and actors with no money or connections in Hollywood, which often stereotypes and excludes them.

Source: [Iconoculture]

Game of Faith



The streets of New York have never looked so barren.

An occasional taxi or bus motors down a boulevard as people wander aimlessly among eerily vacant buildings. Soon, black helicopters loom overhead and armed soldiers close ranks on the streets below.

This isn't your run-of-the-mill video game: Left Behind: Eternal Forces is based on the best-selling Left Behind book series about the apocalypse. But it's the apocalypse without dismemberment or graphic bloodshed, though the game has an element of violence that some Christians argue is counter to teachings of the Bible.

The game's creators say they hope to wriggle into the multibillion-dollar mainstream video game market by offering a real-time strategy option for serious gamers. Yet, they believe the faith-based theme is important, too.

Source: [USATODAY]

Scene-synchronized Scents

Watch and sniff? Specially equipped Japanese movie theaters are enhancing the cinematic experience with scene-synchronized scents. The Fragrance Communication system uses NTT Communications' seat-mounted machines to release preprogrammed aromas.

The fragrant feature will make its big-screen debut at showings of Terrence Malick's The New World, a retelling of the love affair between John Smith and Pocahontas. The film's "fragrance schedule" of custom scents includes Grandeur of Nature, Joy of New Love and Grief of Separation.

Source: [Iconoculture]

Mobile Music Studio

If music truly is the universal language, then millions of music hopefuls are sure to be talking about the new Cingular Mobile Music Studio available exclusively on MySpace. Announced at CTIA Wireless IT & Entertainment 2006, Cingular's Mobile Music Studio is a first-of-its-kind platform that offers hundreds of thousands of unsigned artists and bands on MySpace the tools needed to turn their self-produced music into ringtones.

As the leading lifestyle portal and social networking community, MySpace has more than one million bands and artists using the site to connect and engage with fans. Together with InfoSpace Inc., a long-time Cingular partner and a leading provider of mobile content, Cingular's Mobile Music Studio will help these artists generate even more exposure and excitement for their music. The Mobile Music Studio is just one more example of Cingular's leadership in the convergence of wireless and music.

Currently, the Mobile Music Studio is being trialed by approximately 75 unsigned MySpace bands and artists. Through Cingular's Mobile Music Studio, located on a dedicated page on MySpace, these unsigned artists will first be guided through the licensing and production process led by InfoSpace.

Source: [Playfuls.com]

Viral Videos

You may have heard about YouTube and the viral video craze that's become one of the hottest Internet trends since the birth of social networking sites. Two major viral video portals you may not know of yet are Channel 101 and Channel 102. Think of these sites as the localized, viral video equivalents to American Idol. Here's how it works: anyone can submit a TV show pilot (up to five minutes long). Every month the shows are screened for live audiences in Los Angeles (Channel 101) and New York (Channel 102), and viewers can vote on which shows to renew and which shows to cancel. The top five shows then become the "prime time" lineup, while the losing

shows are cancelled forever. At the next month's viewing, the prime time shows test new episodes against a new selection of pilots, and so on.

Source: [TrendCentral]

Safe TV

TiVo is going even more consumer-happy by offering TiVo KidZone, a "safe" place where kiddies can connect only with programming that meets parental approval. TiVo's offering isn't just a no-brainer blocking service. KidZone automatically filters TV content based on families' personal values. Soft on cartoon violence in general, but touchy about lewd language? Or just can't stand the Wiggles? Set your preferences, and TiVo keeps the offensive out. While KidZone could be a gouging opportunity, the special service isn't priced as an add-on. Beginning in mid-2006, it will be part of the general TiVo package.

Source: [Iconoculture]

Mat for Total Gaming



If you are a gaming-geek then this Entertainment System Sound Mat is all what you could have asked for! Now you don't need to be grounded for hours for you can now lie down comfortably even while you play! The Pyramat mat is loaded with hi-tech like it includes two 4" 25 watt coaxial speakers, a 25 watt subwoofer, detachable remote, pockets for your remote or your cell-phone and between the pockets is a variety of A/V ports so you can connect everything from your Playstation 2, Xbox, Gamecube, TV, DVD Player, or Stereo. The mat features dual-layer cushions for maximum comfort. The bottom layer elevates you off the ground, the top form-fitting layer is molded to support your neck and back for maximum comfort and no aching. And, if you love to play for hours at-a-stretch then don't worry! The mat is made of rip-stop fabric cover and the wipeable nylon used in the mat allows you to clean it properly too!

Source: [CoolBuzz]

Out-of-Home Digital

ActiveMaps Inc: Founded in 2003, AMI began its mission to improve out-of-home digital networks by offering relevant and entertaining media in high-traffic commercial environments. With experience in software development and technology management, AMI developed a proprietary application that delivers real-time media over cellular networks.

AMI develops, deploys, and manages out-of-home digital networks. AMI's digital solution provides an opportunity to aesthetically upgrade commercial environments, entertain your customers, generate new revenue through advertising, increase in-store revenue through point of purchase strategies, and incorporate internal training vehicles.

AMI's out-of-home channel provides real time Sig-Alert and Clear Channel traffic, ESPN sports, MSNBC breaking news, E! Entertainment news, live surf reports by Surflife.com, and Yahoo! stock quotes. AMI's content driven network remains focused on delivering educational, informative and entertaining media for consumers throughout their day.

Source: [ActiveMaps Inc.]

Redbox DVD

In late May McDonald's unveiled plans to bring a taste of Hollywood to Denver by offering new release DVD movie rentals for just one dollar per night, plus tax. McDonald's, long recognized for successfully bringing together the elements of food, lifestyle, and entertainment, is installing fully automated Redbox DVD rental machines in over 100 restaurants throughout Denver, giving customers another great reason to visit The Golden Arches. At the same time, the company is experimenting with quick service ordering (QSO) kiosks at locations around the globe. In short, this quick service restaurant leader has gone kiosk crazy.



In Denver, customers can visit the Redbox DVD machines at participating McDonald's and rent the newest DVD movies releases for just \$1.00 per night, plus tax - with no membership forms and no late fees - and return the same movies at any participating McDonald's Denver location. The latest new DVD releases are added to the Redbox DVD rental machines every Tuesday. McDonald's is the first quick service restaurant to offer new DVD movie rentals to consumers, extending its legacy of introducing new and innovative ways to create relevant, satisfying, and unique customer experiences in its restaurants.

Source: [KIOSK]

Net Videos TV

Dirty secret or not, the Web has long been a platform for downloading and watching pirated clips of television shows like "Lost" and "The Simpsons," much to the chagrin of the television networks.

But now TV producers are turning the tables, creating new shows around video clips culled from the Web.

Bravo TV is among the pioneers of the genre. This week, it began airing a new half-hour series called "Outrageous and Contagious: Viral Video," a show featuring the most popular video shorts circulating the Net, including parodies of the gay-cowboy movie "Brokeback Mountain" and clips of President George Bush's many verbal faux pas. It could be likened to a digital-age version of the old bloopers TV shows.

USA Networks, Fox and NBC are producing similar programming in the coming months. And ABC News Digital plans to enhance its television news program by drawing on video captured by viewers using cellular phones.

Source: [CNet]

LED Illuminated

Illuminated dance floors are nothing new. In the seventies they were all the rage, the problem was that dancers flared hot pants would cover the floor panels and kill the effect. Now, flares or not, the illuminated dance floor is back, this time in LED form.

Using the latest in pressure sensitive LED technology, these panels are designed to interact with club goers moves as well as D.J.'s sets. Special plug ins can be downloaded into the D.J.'s computer equipment allowing an entire set to be pre programmed where the music and lights work together. The panels are not restricted to work only on dance floors and can be fitted to walls, bar tops and Lionel Ritchie's favorite place to dance, ceilings.



Source: [The Cool Hunter]

Easy Home Cinemas

US-based **Magnolia**, a division of BestBuy, is turning the art of installing home theatres (from reclining seats and huge screens to sophisticated sound systems) into a branded, nation-wide business: "Magnolia is the new service that will customize your home theater [i.e. tell you exactly what to buy] and make it all work together [i.e. come to your house and hook it all up]". There are currently 70 Magnolia store-in-stores in BestBuys across the US, targeting a massive market: according to the National Association of Home Builders, 36 percent of people building new homes want a media room, with the majority spending USD 5,000-55,000 (EUR 4,125-41,250/GBP 2,840-28,400) on their systems. International expansion sounds like a no-brainer.

Source: [TRENDWATCHING.COM]



Fashion

Happy Warholiday

LVMH, the luxury conglomerate with Vuitton and Dior in its stable, will build a contemporary art museum in Paris. MAC cosmetics serves up burlesque glamour girl Dita von Teese at a swank dinner at Art Basel Miami. And suddenly, dead artists are at the centre of a major holiday campaign and a luxury designer product launch.

The mutual admiration between art and fashion is turning into a full-on love fest.

For the holidays, Barneys New York launched the ultimate art meets fashion marketing blitz working with the Warhol Foundation on Pop Art windows, shopping bags, a special pair of Levi's, even actual cans of Campbell Soup at \$12 each.



Portraits of the artist by schoolchildren are being exhibited and sold in stores to benefit local arts programs.

"Everyone has been talking Warhol -- two documentaries, skyrocketing auction prices, the imminent Edie Sedgwick movie. It was the perfect year for us to have a Happy Warhol-iday," said Simon Doonan, the store's creative director.

"Everybody wants to be cool and groovy and there is this nagging feeling that nobody was more cool and groovy than Andy."

Source: [The Hamilton Spectator]

Fashionable Message



While fashion has always been used as a form of self expression, we're seeing an increase in the number of clothing labels that go beyond aesthetics to make a statement. COTAM (Clothing of the American Mind) was one of the first labels to jump on this trend, by using quirky graphics and text to convey strong political and social beliefs.

Swedish subscription-based t-shirt label T-post's "94% News, 6% Cotton" tees feature unique, descriptive graphics, complete with a printed text explanation on the inside of the shirt. Each design is based on a current news item, keeping people informed and fashionable at the same time. LA-based Acrylick aims to make fashion "with a positive message", featuring t-shirts with designs that are accompanied by an explanation of the meaning behind the design.

Source: [TrendCentral]

Chemoluminescent Hair Gel

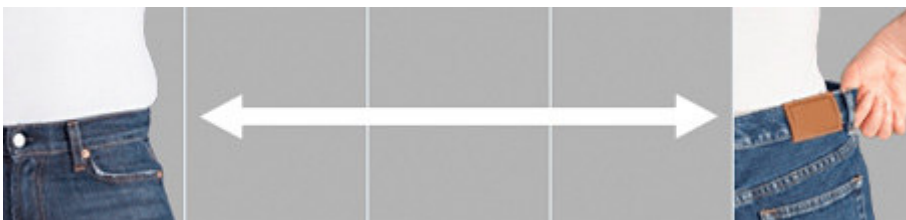


Voltage iGlow is a sulf illuminating hair gel. By mixing fluorophors with an appropriate catalyst a chemical reaction occurs that produces the byproduct of light. No bulbs or batteries are necessary to create the glow, and the illumination shampoos right out. Essentially, wearing Voltage gel is the same as cracking open a raver glow stick and pouring the contents over your locks.

Directions are to open the container, add the powder (catalyst) to the gel (fluorophor suspension), run through hair, and dance! If you really want to maximize your potential glow for a short outing then heat up the gel with a hairdryer after application. The heat will make the gel burn much brighter, but it won't last nearly as long. A 2 oz tube is \$11, and should be enough for a couple of people to use for highlights.

Source: [Popgadget]

Best Fit Jeans



There are more fits, cuts, and styles out there than the average shopper can keep track of, especially since sizes vary dramatically from one brand to the other. In an effort to aid consumers, websites have been created to analyze personal fit information to identify the "best fitting" brand and item for their particular body shape.

Zafu analyzes multiple pieces of fit information (no measuring involved) from the user to identify the "best fitting" brand and style of jeans from a bank of over 200 styles and 70 brands. No jeans are sold on the site, but users can click through to purchase from other online stores.

Source: [TrendCentral]

Loincloths

Loincloths are being marketed by the Mitsukoshi department store in Tokyo's Ginza district as a feature product for the summer months ahead, it has emerged.

A boom in the sale of loincloths has been seen since last spring, and in just half a year the department store has sold about 5,000 loincloths -- roughly 25 times the normal number it sells.

"They're unconstrained and have got good ventilation, and they're suited for Japan's humid summers," a department store official said.

The store predicts that that a full-scale loincloth boom is eminent. It has prepared an abundant range of products for customers, from sleek designs featuring dots, goldfish, and fireworks, to loincloths that come with matching T-shirts.

With the hot summer months ahead, the loincloths may add a new twist to the "Cool-biz" trend of dressing down to cool off.

Source: [Mainichi Interactive]



Flower Rings

Designed with the fun, colour and passion that life offers in mind, omondieu!'s saucy line of floral jewelry has been making waves with the style set since its inception in 2004. Worn by such celebrities as Lenny Kravitz, Nicole Ritchie, and Elisabeth Hasselbeck of The View, omondieu! has generated major buzz from Hollywood to Berlin - and everywhere in between.

"There is a hint of romantic, a touch of being free, and yes, bold and daring femininity in our lines," says founder and lead designer Angela Gwinner. "We are designers, but foremost women who believe in making statements. It's a reflection of the self and, more so, a reflection of lifestyle."

As a Canadian currently residing in Germany, Angela is inspired by secret gardens the world over with all omondieu! rings handmade in Europe. Bringing with her a Canadian sense of natural beauty and relaxed style, Angela's jewelry translates into chic and unique creations - from elegant silk poppies in pink and red affixed to rings to wild dahlia brooches.

Source: [TrendHunter Magazine]

Mother-to-be Brides



Traditional elegant white bridal dress for mother-to-be makes pregnant bride feel beautiful on her special day.

Women today are living their lives on their own terms. A Pea in the Pod, Mimi Maternity and Motherhood Maternity celebrate mothers-to-be at every stage, offering stunning wedding gowns for pregnant brides.

Source: [Yenra]

Safe and Secure

The big, bad world can be a very scary place. And sometimes we feel defenseless against things like war, disease, and people who wear socks with sandals.

Horrific images, all.

Thankfully, there are coping mechanisms: little blue pills, champagne cocktails, and Rebecca Turbow's Safe clothes. Turbow's playful collection of durable dresses, shorts, skirts, and tops are designed to protect wearers both physically and emotionally. Eschewing all colors but teal and white, Turbow uses the same soothing hues favored for hospital scrubs. Each piece is made with soft fabrics and round pads to provide cushioning around vital organs like the stomach and heart. There are also purses, shoulder bags, and wallets to help soothe anxiety, and guys can turn to her monochromatic tees for a little extra security. And now it's all available online.



Source: [DailyCandy]

Food & Beverages

Pinkberry

If you haven't heard about the wonders of Pinkberry, it's neither a new fragrance nor a nasty skin condition but rather a frozen yogurt phenomena that's already taken over LA and recently opened their first NYC location in Koreatown.

Available in only two flavors, plain and green tea (although I've heard no one ever gets the green tea), it's the many toppings—fresh fruit, crunchy sugary cereal, cookie crumbs, nuts, etc.—that elevate the frozen treat into a personalized dessert.

Especially delicious after a salty, garlic-y Korean meal, the yogurt is tangy like real yogurt and not overly sweet like normal frozen yogurt. The space is modernly decorated with Philippe Starck's crystal-clear Charles Ghost stools and Victoria Ghost chairs and wavy, repro pendant lights by Poul Christiansen. Be on the lookout for new stores in Chelsea, the Upper East Side and Soho.



Source: [Cool Hunting]

Premium Water



Bling H2O has a limited edition bottle available in two sizes, that are frosted and have genuine Swarovski crystals that spell out the water's name. "Bling H2O is to bottled water what Rolls Royce is to automobiles; a premium product with premium packaging that merits a premium price. Bling is a stand-alone beverage as well as the perfect compliment to your favorite cocktail." (Baller Status) It has been featured at the Grammy's, VMA's and BET Awards and has been sampled by Jamie Foxx, Paris Hilton (and Tinkerbell), Mariah Carey and Shaquille O'Neal, just to name a few. Prices range from \$24.00 to \$40.00, that's right for a bottle of water.

Source: [GUSH]

Drive Thru Coffee



No other substance screams WAKE UP as effortlessly as coffee. Australian company Muzz Buzz has capitalised on the realisation that people want their coffee to be quick, convenient and satisfying. At Muzz Buzz, all consumers need to do is drive thru. After all, in-transit consumption is designed with one purpose – saving time.

Craig Muzeroll, founder of Muzz Buzz, identified a gap in the Australian market and decided he wanted to give Australians a reason for getting out of bed in

the morning. That reason became Muzz Buzz, a growing franchise drive-thru coffee chain which offers quality coffee at a reasonable price and convenient (high traffic flow) locations.

Premium coffee beans and unique Muzz Buzz flavours tempt consumers' tastebuds and since inception the Muzz Buzz menu has expanded to include convenient-to-eat-while-driving food. (Let's just hope the government doesn't ban drivers from eating and drinking while driving...)

Source: [Springwise]

Fruity Ice Cubes

Ice Kids are secured ice cubes, colored with natural fruit extracts like blueberry, lemon and strawberry. According to the website, "Children can thus pour spring water over Ice Kids fruit ice cubes and enjoy the same tastes as their favorite juices without consuming extra sugar".

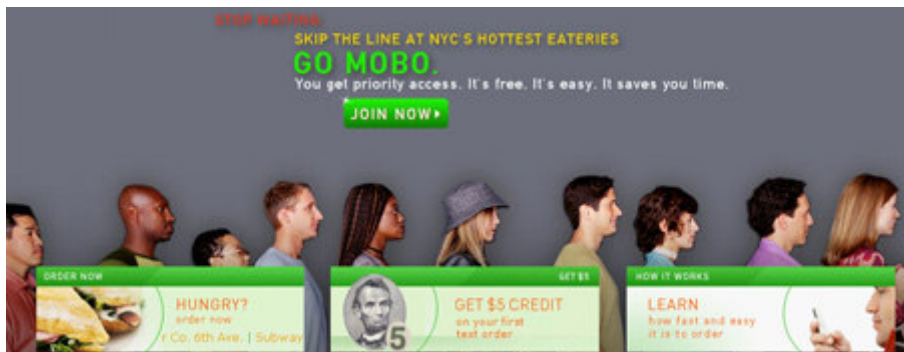
Secured ice cubes are made with purified water, guaranteed free of things that can ruin a tropical vacation (E. coli, hepatitis) or an expensive single-malt Scotch (minerals).

Some consumers might find the benefits of high-priced ice debatable at best. But the addition of natural fruit flavoring lends a healthy twist that may justify the cost for some parents.

Source: [Iconoculture]



Food Text Services



Think of Mobo as curbside takeout for urban dwellers. The service – short for "mobile order" – enables Manhattanites to order and pay for food ahead of time. Here's how it works: Hungry citizens use their cellphones (or a computer) to text an order to a restaurant from a selected list and pay with a linked credit card. The restaurant sends a text message when the order is ready and has a special Mobo counter for pickup. So far, participating eateries include Subway, Quiznos and a few independent salad and sushi joints. Want the usual? Frequent Mobo users can save their "faves" for speedier service.

Hyper lives demand maximization of all the gadgetry at our fingertips. "Fast food" doesn't mean the same thing it did even five years ago, and consumers expect businesses to keep up.

Source: [Iconoculture]

Cocktail Kick

The next big thing to hit the Cocktail Kingdom is a retro-modern shaker full of fun from Phoenix, Arizona-based Sweet's Brand, Inc. The company is proud to introduce Cocktail Kick — a new product that adds an extra puckery, tart, tangy taste to adult beverages like margaritas, mojitos, martinis, bloody marys, and more.

"I like a good margarita and whiskey sour," says company founder and CEO, Ed Sweet. "But they've never been sour enough for me...Until now. Anyone who favors drinks with lemon, lime, and other fruit flavors will find my Cocktail Kick a terrific enhancement." Sweet's Brand Cocktail Kick can be mixed into drinks and used to rim the glass. "Some people like to create a rimming mixture by combining Cocktail Kick with sugar or salt," says Mr. Sweet. "But I'm a purist who prefers the puckery taste of Cocktail Kick all by itself."



Sweet's Brand Cocktail Kick consists of 100% citric acid crystals, and is as safe as it is sour. Citric acid comes from lemons, limes, and other fruits and is used in sodas and candy.

Source: [Cocktail Kick]

Canine Cafe

If the Chicago City Council passes an ordinance letting dogs dine alongside their owners at outdoor cafés, chef Didier Durand of Cyrano's Bistrot will serve a \$5 prix fixe canine menu to his patrons' pets. Chef Durand has spent months testing the canine menu on his poodle, Princess. Possible dishes include ostrich pâté and bone marrow gateau – and a ceramic bowl full of mineral water, naturellement.

Source: [Iconoculture]



Straws with Flavours



2006's Best Business Ideas

Does anyone remember wax straws? And how there was a fleeting fad of coating the insides with chocolate syrup so it would flavour your milk as you sucked?

The chocolate flavour never lasted very long (and I always ended up destroying my straw in the process) but as we all know, retro is in, and technology is rampant!

Enter the **Sipahh**: easily the most exciting product we saw at the Fine Food Show last week. And we weren't the only ones. This innovative flavouring straw won Best New Retail Product at the Sydney tradeshow as well. The straws are unique in its use of tiny flavoured beads entrapped within the straw. A special filter at each end of the straw keeps the beads in but allows milk to be sucked through. The beads, which are made of tapioca starch, gradually dissolve and flavour each mouthful of milk.

Source: [GRAB YOUR FORK]

Beans in Toast

The Daily Telegraph: FOR those who find baked beans on toast just too messy to put together, help is on the way. Heinz has devised a frozen baked bean sandwich which simply needs to be heated in a toaster.

Heinz chief Bill Johnson said the company needed to give people "new ways to use beans".

"If people take the time to cook beans and put it on toast, why shouldn't we cut the process for them and give them beans on toast?" he said. The technology is being developed by Heinz researchers in New Zealand.



Source: [The Daily Telegraph]

Mangos and Apples for Busy People



Although nothing beats fresh fruit, and apples and bananas are conveniently packaged by nature, sometimes consumers favour something even easier. E4B ("Easy for Busy") steps up to the challenge, packing the puree of multiple fruits into portable pouches. E4B's mango flavour, for example, contains 2 mangos, 1 apple, half a banana, and no artificial additives. Packaging was originally developed in Japan for Nasa, and the pouch's seven layers make for a shelf-life of a year. The products are slurpable, but presented as snacks, not drinks. Pricing seems a bit steep at USD 5.99, and the product is currently only available in (parts) of the United States.

Source: [Springwise]

Meal Assembly



The concept has exploded in the past year. Entrepreneurs across the US have started their own dinner assembly stores, and the field's leader, Dream Dinners, has expanded from 49 locations.

Though they vary in style, all of the dinner assembly companies offer essentially the same service: customers schedule a session online, picking meals from a monthly menu. Customers move around the store, assembling a meal at each station by scooping ingredients into freezer bags or disposable baking pans. Meals are easily customized to accommodate personal tastes or diets. Finally, the packaged meals are clearly labeled with cooking instructions.

Business is booming for a reason: the meal assembly concept offers time-starved consumers an innovative and convenient way to provide their families with nutritious, tasty, home-cooked meals, with more variety, healthier options and at a lower cost than take-out or frozen supermarket meals.

Source: [Springwise]

Ice Cream on Demand



Banana ice cream with peanut butter cups mixed in? Not a problem for MooBella, a high-tech vending machine that makes ice cream to order in 45 seconds.

Because it uses flash freezing instead of the standard slow churning method, MooBella can produce ice cream on demand from room temperature ingredients. The front of the machine features a touch-screen display showing a menu of flavours and mix-ins, allowing customers to create any combination they like. If the machine runs out of a flavour, it's removed from the menu and an order is automatically placed for a refill.

Raised in Massachusetts, MooBella is decidedly high-tech. Not only does its onboard computer run on Linux, the machine also communicates wirelessly through satellite technology to provide company headquarters with inventory and sales data.

Source: [Springwise]

Crispy Lettuce Wraps

President's Choice, a Canadian brand of food products, introduced new "Crispy Lettuce Wraps", leaves of hybrid lettuce for the purpose of making low-carb bread-free burgers.

Because so many carb-conscious people are using lettuce leaves in lieu of hamburger buns, Loblaw's Inc., which owns the President's Choice brand, decided to sell lettuce leaves designed expressly for this purpose.

They claim it's a versatile cross between Romaine and Iceberg lettuce flexible enough for folding, but still crispy.



Source: [Strange New Products]

Multi Cola

Ipifini's Programmable Liquid Container technology employs buttons on the container's surface that release additives (flavors, colors, fragrances) into the liquid. Additive buttons allow for the consumer to choose variations of the liquid in the container at the point of consumption. For example, a programmable cola bottle with buttons for lemon, lime, vanilla, and cherry flavors as well as a caffeine button allows for thirty-two potential choices of soda. A programmable paint container with twenty pigment additive buttons allows the consumer to choose from one million colors.

Source: [Yenra]

Novelty Fruit

A green and red-striped tomato is the latest "designer" food set to hit the supermarket shelves in Britain. The cherry-sized fruit was created in response to increased demand for novelty produce, said Marks & Spencer. Called the tiger tomato, it has magenta-coloured flesh and is slightly sweeter than standard varieties. The tomatoes were grown in Lancashire and the Isle of Wight.

M&S is also launching an even sweeter-tasting variety called the "strawmato" which it says goes well with melted chocolate. Tiger tomatoes cost STG1.99 (A\$4.80) for 275g.

Source: [SBS; sourced from PA]

7UP Curvy

Clear lime brand of PepsiCo India, 7UP, has unveiled its curvaceous new packaging Curvy. Promoting the new packaging is 7UP's popular brand mascot Fido Dido in company with Bollywood siren Mallika Sherawat.



Says Pepsi Foods Pvt Ltd, India executive marketing director Punita Lal, "We are pleased to present the new 7UP 'Curvy' bottle which spells style, aesthetics & differentiation. A unique, packaging solution with stylish contours, 7UP Curvy is unlike anything we have seen so far in India. We are positive that the cool new 7UP 'Curvy' bottle will enhance consumer connect with the youth".

Source: [Indiantelevision.com]

Energy Drink

In 2005, U.S. energy drink sales grew to US\$3.3 billion, up 75% from US\$2 billion, making it the fastest growing portion of the non-alcoholic beverage market, according to Beverage Digest. Globally, the energy drink market topped US\$5 billion in 2004.

Dozens of energy drink brands have hit store shelves since Red Bull was introduced to the U.S. market in 2001, including PimpJuice, which Nelly promises will "make you party all night just like a pimp."

Given the sagging libidos of hundreds of millions of baby boomers, Austria's energy drink Turn On, containing Schizandra, a native Chinese herb that has for centuries been used for its aphrodisiac effects, should find ready appeal.

Source: [Ubercool]

Vitamin Beer

A brewer in Dallas has created a beer that promises to be better for you because it is filled with vitamins, according to a Local 6 News report. Stampede beer is enhanced with B vitamin, folic acid and other essential vitamins, according to creator Lawrence Schwartz.

"Stampede is the first Vitamin-enhanced beer," Schwartz said.

Schwartz said the federal government told him that he cannot claim the beer is good for drinkers and can't list vitamins on the labels because it would be an implied health claim. However, that's how the beer maker is setting his beer from the rest of the brands, according to the report. Schwartz said Stampede tastes just like regular beer but with a kick.

Source: [Local6.com]



www.ubercool.com



Wrigley's First New Product In Nearly A Century

Known throughout the ad world for its iconic "Doublemint Twins" ads, the Doublemint brand today debuted its first new product in nearly a century, along with an ad campaign that satirizes its own brand.

Wrigley's Doublemint Twins mints feature two flavors in one mint. Offered in both Wintercreme and Mintcreme flavors, Doublemint Twins mints packaging comes with the familiar blue and green Doublemint arrows and come in a convenient, flip-top pack. Suggested retail price is 69 cents for 37 mints.

"Consumers told us that they were looking for an innovative and exciting way to enjoy the Doublemint brand that they grew up with," stated Paul Chibe, senior marketing director for Wrigley.

Source: [BRANDWEEK]

Caffeine SpazzStick

Caffeine, as many a sanctimonious health freak has informed us, is a drug. One you can be very, very addicted to. To which we reply: So call us Pete Doherty and pass the biscotti.

Still, the late-night runs to your dealer for double espressos have gotten a little out of hand. What you need instead is SpazzStick, the lip balm formulated with copious amounts of caffeine. Invented by an Alaskan police officer in need of a wake-up aid (polar bear-on-polar bear crime is apparently way down), the balm contains skin-softening ingredients that heal your lips in even the coldest weather and comes in tasty flavors like vanilla toffee and cool mint. The large quantities of caffeine, meanwhile, are absorbed quickly and effortlessly through your lips. So you can cop a fix any time you need it.



Source: [DailyCandy]

No Fear of Allergies



There are those who do the whole nondairy/nonanimal product thing by choice. To them we say, best of luck. We'll just be over here enjoying our Easy Cheese and Slim Jims. And then there are those with allergies who do it because they have no choice. Them, we feel for — that sucks. But things are about to turn around, thanks to Divvies. The company's treats are made without dairy, eggs, or nuts. For an afternoon refreshment, try an oatmeal raisin, chocolate chip, or molasses cookie. Or take a goody bag filled with kettle corn, chocolates, jawbreakers, and gum

balls to the movies. But the best bet is the website's monthly delivery program, which will save you from scouring grocery store shelves and poring over labels for a safe indulgence.

Source: [DailyCandy]

Drink in a Tube

eBizAsiaLink.com: Drinks come mostly in cans or bottles, but tubes? No way. Well, tell that to the **Wenger Co**, which has been making mustard, vinegar, ketchup, etc for more than a century. In 2003, it decided to fill metal tubes with energy and vodka drinks under the GO range, and it has never looked back since.

The tube is small and handy and can be slotted into bags or pockets without taking up as much space as a bottle. Also, the small tube prevents others from putting drugs into your drink, should the thought ever occur to anyone.

There are nine types to choose from, including GO Wodka Energy, GO Wodka Extreme Cranberry, GO Pure Energy and GO Sport Isotonic Cherry.

Source: [eBizAsiaLink.com]



Resurrecting Drink



Although initially created as an anti-hangover elixir, **Resurrect** is now becoming a part of the daily diet for the health conscious individual. Formulated with over 19 vitamins and herbs, Resurrect has the properties to help detoxify your liver, aid digestion, neutralize intestinal toxins, and increase energy and endurance.

These vitamins and herbs help detoxify the human body from all the toxins faced on a daily basis, such as alcohol consumption, air pollution, and cigarette smoke. Resurrect can also be used as a mixer with your favorite liquor. Because of its refreshing, fruity flavor and the ability to help detoxify the body, Resurrect mixes wonderfully with vodka, gin, and rum.

Source: [Resurrect]

Chinese New Year Takeout

T&T Supermarket is celebrating the arrival of the Year of the Dog in style this month.

Walk into any T&T right now and you'll be greeted by a blaze of red and gold, as the stores gear up to celebrate Chinese New Year-which this year includes a more polished offering of T&T's popular table-ready, takeout Chinese New Year's menu.

The Hired Belly is a big fan of T&T, if for no other reason than its well-stocked live seafood tanks, which offer up an affordable, fresh shellfish feast on a whim. There's more, of course, from aisles of staples and specialties to frozen dim sum, Asian vegetables, barbecued meats to go and baked treats.

Whether you're a self-confessed kitchen klutz or a seasoned dabbler in Chinese cuisine-no fuss, no muss-these well-executed dishes offer the perfect chance to put on your own Chinese New Year's celebration at home.

"Think restaurant food at supermarket prices," jokes T&T's Melina Hung, who says busy schedules and the lack of an official Canadian holiday make it challenging for people to find time to prepare the dishes they need to celebrate in style.



Source: [The VanCouver courier]

Organic matters



Mothers of Organic – otherwise known as M.O.O. – is an online beehive of pro-organic moms. The maternal healthnuts share info and inspiration about how to raise healthier, happier kids and steer clear of pesticides, preservatives, and pollutants.

The all-natural network was created by farmer-owned food label Organic Valley. Nutritionists, organic chefs, wellness experts, and celebrity activists (like Raffi!) regularly contribute advice, exposés, and personal experiences.

Multimedia downloads, educational tools, and fun activity suggestions help wellness-minded moms instill the organic spirit (and healthy eating habits) in their kids.

Organic has moved out of the specialty aisles of our grocery stores and now pop off almost every shelf.

Source: [Iconoculture]

Gadgets

Nicostopper

If smoking de-addiction is one of your new year resolutions AND you are serious about it, check out the Nicostopper from Fagor.

The Nicostopper is an electronic cigarette dispenser in which you can fit a maximum of 10 cigarettes at a time. Once the ciggies are in, you program the intervals at which you would like to take a smoke. Not only will you be allowed to take the cigarettes out only at the pre-defined intervals, but, like a discerning grandmother, the Nicostopper will also flash "self-help" messages each time to make you feel guilty as well. The trick, of course, lies in sticking to the device alone to dispense your cigarettes. And we're hoping that the \$300 you would have to shell out for it might be a good enough incentive.



Source: [Popgadget]

Play iPod from Backpack

Nike has introduced the C.O.R.E. Backpack iD, a new customizable backpack that features integrated iPod controls. No more digging for that iPod. The backpack's keypad, located on the right shoulder strap, has controls for volume, tracks and play/pause, and connects to iPods via a dock connector.

The coolest feature is the online customization feature -- pick your color and even chose options such as locking zippers and a ventilated back. Dual main compartments are roomy enough for books, binders and all the gear you need for your day.

Source: [Popgadet]



Wearable Computing Devices

If you want to be always equipped with your favorite personal computing devices all-the-time without carrying any external baggage then, how about walking down the street wearing all of them in a special outfit. Well, if you quiet liked the idea then you dont have to go on looking for a Bond-tailor to get one, the Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute (ETRI) has designed one for you, the Flexible OLED suit. The special outfit is decorated with wearable personal computing devices.

Source: [BornRich]



USB Feline



It's Kitty's world, folks. We just live in it. Though for guarding purpose dogs are the best options over cats. The canines are alert and scary (at least when needed) as opposed to the felines who are sluggish and gullible all the time. But this USB Kitty begs to differ! It's a watch-cat for your computer. When you're working on PC, you need to leave your chair for answering nature's call or whatever else. But at such times, children or spouses make the best of it and try to peek into what you have been unto. When you walk away from your computer and there somebody wants to touch your PC, it will meow, hiss and sing melodies in order to scare away the intruders.

Source: [Gizmodiva]

iPod Stories

PlayAway Books are like little iPods that contain books such as John Grisham's "The Broker" and Dan Brown's "The Da Vinci Code".

They come with ear buds and a lanyard to wear around your neck so people can still see what you're reading or in this case listening to. I'm still a fan of regular books, but these would be good for traveling.



Source: [Gush magazine]

Keep Cool

The Chosun Ilbo lists some unique products whose fun concepts and designs can help you cool down the last hot summer days.

The summer's biggest hit is a small and handily designed USB fan that needs no external power when connected to a desktop or laptop.

Source: [Digital Chosunilbo]





Headband + Headphones + Headset

For most of us who use headphones while commuting, jogging or otherwise, it generally seems like a hard task to look stylish and wear headphones at the same time. But what if you could do both? Take a look at [Swapsets](#), an interesting new line of headbands for women by designer Steffi Thomas.

Featured on the ZDNet review "Wild for women's gadgets," this headband helps you dress it up by functioning as a headband-cum-headphones-cum-headset. Whew! Seems like a pretty ingenious idea and the product itself looks too adorable to resist. The headset is optional and so are Dangles, which can be attached to the bottom of the headband to look like earrings.

Source: [\[Popgadget\]](#)

Power On The Go



Fun in the sun gets a jolt of power with Solio, a solar-powered battery charger for iPods, GPS, cellphones and even digital cameras, that folds up into a 4-in.-by-2-in. teardrop. Road warriors running low on juice can open up Solio's three solar panels, which fan out like a clover, and charge up their electronic gadgets with a small connector cord, on the spot.

Taking toys on the road is becoming an essential part of travel, and portable, simple and universal tools that keep them going are key to making consumers feel prepared. For cautious travelers, a degree of self-sufficiency around important gadgets creates feelings of security and empowerment.

Source: [\[Iconoculture\]](#)

Easy Power Strip

As we all know, the biggest problem with conventional power strips are the unconventional plugs with whom the ol' girl mates. These boys come in all sizes and shapes resulting in at least one or two unusable sockets due to overlap. Well no more dear reader, at least not if the 2006 IDEA award winning design concept from the kids over at Brooklyn's Platt Institute is taken from art to part anytime soon.

The E-rope, designed by Chul Min Kang and Sung Hun Lim, is a modular power strip which can be twisted about to better accommodate cable gore with large, bulky plugs. Worried about

vampire devices quietly leaching power off the mains? No problem, just give the socket section a 90-degree twist to strangle-off the current. Of course, while you're down there you could just unplug the damn thing but that's just an inconvenient truth, eh?

E-rope [Engadget]

Migraine Zapper

I'm fortunate enough not to suffer with migraines, but I have had a couple of occasions when I've had the most unbearable headaches and sensitivity to bright lights, and I can only imagine what it must be like to suffer continuously with migraine headaches.

The hand-held migraine zapper is a gadget which produces short but strong, low-frequency magnetic pulses that suppress the spread of a migraine, though exactly how, isn't well understood at this time.



The device is a spin-off of neuroscientific studies attempting to identify functions of different parts of the brain. Using the technique of transcranial magnetic stimulation or TMS, researchers found that they could map the different parts of the brain that deal with (or are somehow associated with) language, memory, and vision etc. They did this by either stimulating them or suppressing them, applying different TMS signals to different parts of the brain.

Source: [Coolest Gadgets]

Triple Scoop

It's summertime, and the livin' is . . . way too hot to be easy. Fortunately, manufacturers keep churning out delicious new ways to feed these seasonal cravings. Can't agree on an ice cream flavor? No problem - make three at once.



Strawberry, chocolate chip or French vanilla? Ice cream, frozen yogurt or sorbet? Make all three in just 20 minutes with the new Triple Scoop gourmet ice cream and frozen treat maker from Euro-Pro. No stirring is needed with this automatic machine, which comes with three insulated stainless steel canisters and a book of recipes. A see-through cover with feeder hole lets you keep an eye on the treats and easily add mix-ins such as nuts or candies. Available at national retailers and Web sites for \$59.99 to \$89.99.

Source: [JS Online]

Caffine innovation

The Milan furniture fair contest focused on how the coffee rituals will evolve in the future. The first prize winner is the "Nespresso Card" that is a personal chipcard, which holds coffee preferences for registered individuals. The card enables you to access your favorite coffee anytime, anywhere. The second prize winner is an interesting concept of InCar coffee machine featured here that is



designed by Thijs van Cuyk and Lavrans Laading of the Netherlands. The gadget fits conveniently into the centre console of a car and can also double as an armrest when you aren't using it to make lattes. So, now you can have as many cups of hot coffee as you wish even when you are driving!

Source: [Bornrich]

Health & Beauty

Facials Good Enough to Eat

It's the newest trend among Scottsdale spas - pureed perishables used to attract upscale clientele. And local spagoers are eating it up, spending up to \$240 for a single treatment. "Right now, I am just seeing everything that you can possibly eat in a spa treatment," said Lisa Kasanicky, chief executive of Arizona Spa Girls, a local spa directory Web Site.

Spa owners say newly discovered healing benefits in foods like caviar, coffee and chocolate are helping spagoers stay young and beautiful. But others say it's mostly hype.



For instance, the antioxidants in fruits like pomegranates and cranberries are supposed to reduce wrinkles and improve skin. They are both common ingredients in facials and body scrubs. "Probably the hottest food right now is pomegranate. Pomegranate is the new green tea for spa treatments because of all the antioxidants," Kasanicky said. "But honestly, it's probably better if you just ate it."

Regardless, the unusual is becoming so usual at the spas that Scottsdale's Convention and Visitor's Bureau took notice and compiled a list of some of the more exotic resort spa treatments. The list included everything from a coffee-grounds body wrap to a massage using warm golf balls.

"Spa is becoming more and more of an everyday thing in people's health and wellness routine," said Laura McMurchie, vice president of communications for the Scottsdale Convention and Visitors Bureau.

"People are looking for more exotic and different types of treatments," she said.

Source: [East Valley Tribune]

Dental Hygiene

Zenith Dental introduces Kolorz, a new hygiene line that includes a Topical Anesthetic Gel, Prophylaxis Paste, and Foam and Gel Fluoride.

To develop this new product, Zenith went to gourmet food industry experts to develop products with a superior taste and smell. Care has been taken to assure that these products contain no controversial sweeteners such as aspartame or saccharin. Kolorz contains Sucralose®, a safe, noncaloric



sweetener, and Xylitol, a natural sweetener found in fruits and berries. Both of these are safe for diabetics. In order to prevent allergic reactions in patients with Celiac disease, all Kolorz products are gluten-free.

You will be very impressed with the taste and smell of the variety of popular flavors. Be sure to try this one. Order from your dealer or go to www.zenithdental.com for more information.

Source: [Dental Economics]

Straight Up Hairstyling Machine



Beautiful Vending, a UK company, has released a hair straightener vending machine. Their site describes, "We all know how frustrating the British weather can be, the rain, wind and even the heat can cause perfectly styled hair to 'frizz' and ruin the best night or day out. The saviour of bad hair days has arrived, the Straight Up machine is now available in clubs, bars and gyms, so for those occasions when sleek and sexy turns to shock and horror, we have the solution."

Source: [Trendhunter]

Mobile Dentist



Samantha Taube stepped out of the MGM Grand hotel and casino into the bright sun to walk to the parking lot. After a short distance, she approached a trailer, entered, sat in a dentist's chair and had her teeth cleaned.

"If you know Las Vegas traffic these days, you know what a benefit this is," said Taube, who trains employees in the huge casino's slot machine operations. After 20 minutes, she was back at work.

Down on the Strip, Beverly Egan, a poker dealer at the Stardust Resort and Casino, sat in air-conditioned comfort, in another mobile dental office decorated in pale blue amid menacing power drills and X-ray equipment. Egan had popped in to have X-rays taken before scheduled dental work. She, too, appreciated the convenience.

"I'd have to take three hours at least if I had to drive to an office," she said. This visit took only 30 minutes.

The mobile units are owned by On-Site Dental NV, a Las Vegas company founded seven years ago by Chris Davenport, who is not a dentist, but an entrepreneur. His company's basic service combines technology, mobility and the American reverence for saving time.

On-Site Dental owns two trailers, each fitted with two dental offices in which dentists and hygienists see about 1,000 patients every Monday through Saturday in the parking lots of 11 casinos in Las Vegas. Most of the patients are employees covered by the casinos' dental insurance plans, which pay up to 80 percent of the costs of most dentistry.

Source: [IHT]

Ingestible Skin Care

Borba, a manufacturer of cosmetics and skin care products, extended its line of "ingestible skin care" products with its new "Chocolate Clarifying Bar".

The zit-zapping confection contains Borba's "Skin Balance Clarifying Aqua-Less Crystalline Powder" to remove toxins and improve skin clarity. The powder contains a cultivated bio-vitamin complex which helps the skin regenerate its natural support system.

If it was eating too much chocolate that put zits on your face, now you can eat too much chocolate to take them off. What will you tell your kids now?

Source: [Strange New Products]

Slimming Toothpaste

Hungry? Go brush your teeth. White Glo Crave Away and F.A.S.T. are two toothpastes that claim to curb hunger cravings with herbal formulas that signal the brain that the body has eaten.

Consumers hot on the trail of a thinner body are happy to try new therapies that don't involve eating less or exercising more. Whiter teeth and a thinner body to go with it? As beauty buffs raise the bar on what they see in the mirror, multitasking products give them greater hope of keeping up.

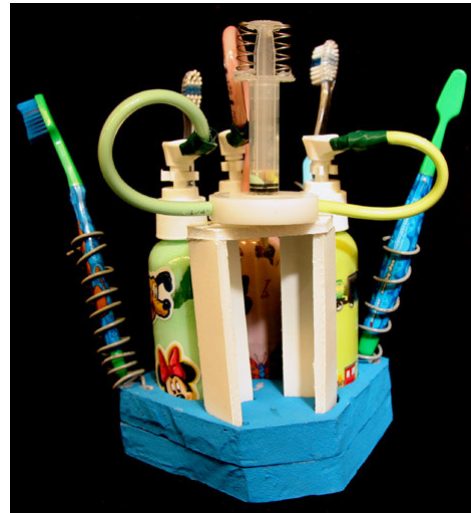
Source: [Iconoculture]



Toothbrush Tech

Leave it to the folks at MIT to develop high-tech...toothbrushes? And not just any toothbrush, but "toothbrush toys promoting good dental hygiene."

Instructor Barry Kudrowitz's Toy Product Design course created prototypes of kid-friendly toothbrushes and toothpaste dispensers to get kids excited about dental hygiene. Tough job, huh? They actually came up with some really cool stuff. Entries include a brush that dispenses a sticker every time you brush well, a toothbrush that lets you mix up your own flavors, and a even gravity-defying, magnetic Batman Batcave to hold dental supplies. (Results of the design competition come out soon.)



The course worked with MIT Dental, Hasbro toys, and with the real expert themselves... 2nd graders at a local academy.

Before you dismiss the significance of toothbrush technology, consider these findings from an MIT survey: "Toothbrush beats out car and computer as the invention Americans can't live without."

Source: [\[Gearlog.com\]](http://Gearlog.com)

New Medical Trend in China

Chinese biomedical scientists are now developing a new approach to medicine by combining traditional Chinese medicine and Western biomedical science. This is the current medical trend in China. Some significant results have already been achieved. For instance, in treating fractures the traditional dexterity in coaxing broken ends of bones into alignment has been successfully adopted, and x-ray has been used to check whether there was accurate bone union. Heart diseases are treated with Western drugs in combination with Chinese herbal medicine, and the results are encouraging. Ancient theories such as Fu Chen Pei Ben (to strengthen the patient's vitality) are applied, for instance, in cancer therapy, i.e., to stimulate the patient's appetite and to improve his general condition with herbs while being treated with Western anti-cancer remedies. However, the Chinese admit that this process has only just begun.

Source: [\[Entrez PubMed\]](http://Entrez PubMed)

Ethical Beauty



For those dismayed by Anita Roddick's "sell-out" to L'Oreal and who have sworn never to darken the Body Shop's doorstep again, the hunt is on for alternatives.

There was a time when "ethical beauty" was a bit of an oxymoron. To be ethical, it seemed, a product had to be worthy, unglamorous and look and smell as if it was made of sand and sawdust.

Things have changed radically (due in part to the dramatic rise of the Body Shop in the Eighties) and there are now many ranges suiting all sorts of budgets offering good quality, effective and even luxurious products and most are available in a health food shop, salon or chemist near you.

Source: [News & Star]

VeriFresh

The first thing most people probably feel like doing after talking with Theodore Welt and Jonathan Weisberg is brushing their teeth and cleaning their tongues.

It's not because they're disgusting or anything, quite the contrary. It's just that the two founders of Israeli company VeriFresh Ltd. are very persuasive and descriptive when talking about their line of futuristic products including tongue cleaners, gum massagers and flossers. They believe they're setting a new standard in oral care, which provides a solution for the 200 million Americans who suffer from a range of oral problems ranging from bad breath to periodontal-disease-causing bacteria.



"Wherever there are toothbrushes, there's also going to be a tongue cleaner," Welt states emphatically like a mouth care evangelist, as he takes the VeriFresh tongue cleaner out of his briefcase to demonstrate.

According to Welt, the tongue cleaner is a new design of an age-old product that provides many oral and general-health benefits.

Source: [Israel21c]

Wrist-top Clinic

WristClinic, made by Ireland's Telcomed, monitors vital signs with a wireless wrist-top device that measures everything from body temperature and blood pressure to oxygen saturation and one-lead EKG. Patients activate the WristClinic at preset times, using icons on the LCD menu to transmit data to a telemedicine call center or an automated Web-based databank, where it's stored for later retrieval by e-mail, Web, or fax. Consumers also can opt to have measurements transmitted continuously.



Today's health-conscious consumers are as concerned with monitoring their stats as they are about long-term physical fitness. Crunching the numbers trumps doing crunches. Globetrotting executives and other busy consumers who need to keep tabs on their vital signs feel more secure leaving home with a mobile wrist-top clinic.

Source: [Iconoculture]

Powerpuff Make-up Artists



Women have always treated the ladies like a no man's land, a place where the barriers and bitchiness of womanhood come down and two strangers will bond over the texture of a Stila lip gloss, the pigment in a Nars blusher, or a simple, "I really like your top." Given our ability to turn a lavatory into a private boudoir of chat and beauty, it's a wonder that nobody thought of the Powderpuff Girls sooner.

For £400, you can hire in this crack team of professional make-up artists in sexy but prim Agent Provocateur-inspired uniforms, who will preen your lady guests with a VIP hair and make-up session — and they do it all in the loos. Katie Reynolds, Powderpuff's girl-in-chief, says that, at weddings, they tend to be booked for the start of the reception so guests can have their make-up touched up before the next stage in a long day. "At late-night parties, though, you 'll get women coming in who want a whole adventurous change to their look, mid-evening."

Reynolds is a ballet dancer-turned-make-up artist, with a love of retro style. She says the Powderpuff Girls offer more than just a useful hair and make-up service: it's a whole aesthetic. "I love Lulu Guinness's look," she says. "We're coming from the same place, playing on that 1950s style, when women looked immaculate."

Source: [The Sunday Times]

Radical Cosmetics

For products as individual and personal as the look of your face, it is remarkable that cosmetics merchandising in the U.S. has remained stuck in its longstanding "look but don't touch" tradition. On one hand, drug stores sell cosmetics in sealed-plastic packaging that require shoppers to buy things like lipstick without a chance to try it on. Alternatively, department stores allow more hands-on access, but only with the hovering attention of a sales person whose commission is driven by pushing a specific brand. Both approaches leave something to be desired.

Spotting a void in the marketplace, Sephora has staked out the middle ground. Three years ago Europe's leading retail beauty chain moved into the U.S. with a simple, if radical, concept. It created a retail environment that invited customers to roam the store and try on different lipsticks, eyeliners and blushes made by many different manufacturers. Instead of department store-type cosmetics counters that force shoppers to interact with a salesperson to sample a product,

Sephora is organized around freestanding racks that feature such chic brands as Bulgari, Christian Dior, Gucci, Lancome and Calvin Klein.

Sephora's open, minimalist displays entice shoppers with sumptuous product colors, packaging and bottle design. Strategically placed mirrors, tissues, cotton swabs, astringent and makeup remover encourage sampling. Prices usually out of sight in department stores are prominently marked. Without the pressure of a salesperson eager to close a sale and move on to the next customer, shoppers feel free to spend an hour or more trying out different colors and different brands until they arrive at the exact ones they like.

Source: [BusinessWeek]

Pure H2O

Antin has long required his model and actor clients to shower with bottled spring water the night before a photo shoot so their strands are in top condition for the next day—and free of what Antin says are the dulling and drying effects of tap water. So when Antin created his Jonathan Product hair care line, he used only de-ionized, purified water to offset the dulling minerals found in tap water. Now, Antin has taken water purification to the next level with the introduction of his Beauty Water™ Shower Purification System, a revolutionary water filter for your shower—and the closest you can get to showering with pure spring water short of a trip to the Rockies.



According to Antin and his team of researchers, tap water is loaded with chlorine, heavy metals, and other harsh chemicals that dry out the hair, strip the skin and hair of natural protective oils and prematurely fade hair color. This breakthrough water filtration system removes these damaging elements, rendering hair soft, shiny, and all the more manageable. “The biggest comment we get about the shower filter is how much softer it makes your skin and hair,” says Antin.

Source: [Sephora.com]

Alarm Pills

As technology lets us monitor more aspects of our lives, it can mean safer medicating and better health for forgetful patients.

Time for a pill? The SIMpill bottle takes the guesswork out of medicine schedules, using cellphone tech to alert patients (or their caregivers) when a prescribed dose is missed. Pharmacists program pill-popping times into the dispenser, and if the bottle's opened too early or too late, SIMpill notifies the patient via text message on their cell. If there's no response, an alert hits the phone of a family member or other designated caregiver (Business Day 1.25.05). If the pill's taken at the appointed time, there's no warning – a better system than constant alarms, says SIMpill's inventor, Dr. David Green, because “people get message fatigue”



Source: [Iconoculture]

Homes & Living

Garden Offices



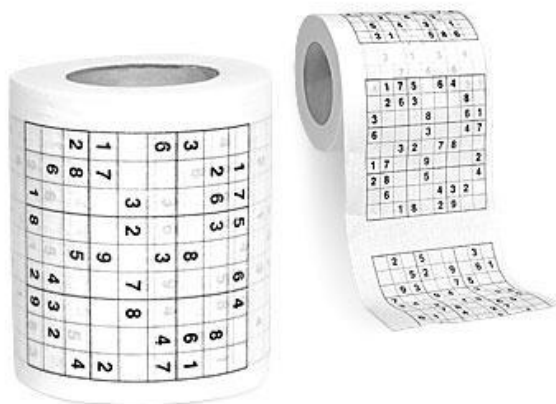
For everyone who'd like to escape office politics and the daily commute, iscape manufactures and sells purpose-built garden offices. Both are multi-use outdoor living spaces, but the Miana was specifically designed to be used as an office.

Every garden office comes complete with integral electrics and includes sockets and lighting. The buildings are designed to fall within UK permitted development rights, so in most cases buyers don't need planning permission.

Design conscious lawn commuters might be more interested in the company's bespoke service, which creates garden offices to a customer's exact wishes, with all stages of the project undertaken and co-ordinated in-house.

Source: [Springwise]

Washroom Fun



It's official, Sudoku has jumped the shark. Why read the newspaper during your washroom visit, when you can challenge your brain with Sudoku. As the site puts it, "if you make a mistake no-one need know, you can just flush it away."

Source: [Uber-Review]

Tilted Soup Bowls

Willie Jacobs, a 69-year-old retired machinist, was doodling on a napkin while rehabbing from a heart attack when he came up with the concept for a tilted soup bowl.

Seven years later, with a patent and mold in his possession and a manufacturer under contract, Jacobs and his wife, Linda, now find their product listed in one of the largest professional rehabilitation catalogs in the country and on the shelves at local Walgreens stores. The bowl is designed for the disabled and seniors with unsteady hands who have difficulty spooning food from regular bowls. It's also marketed for young children, whose parents want to avoid spills.



The bowl is angled in the bottom, allowing the user to easily spoon from it without tilting it forward. To the naked eye, the colorful, microwaveable and dishwasher-safe product looks like an ordinary bowl.

"It's a useful product," for seniors and the disabled, said Willie Jacobs, who adds that his grandchildren love them.

The bowls are manufactured by Warren Specialty Molding in Chicago, and are marketed and distributed by Glori Bee's Kidz Corp., the couple's upstart company. Glori Bee's is on track to generate \$250,000 in revenues from the bowls this year, said Linda Jacobs, adding that she hopes to hit \$1 million next year.

Source: [Chicago Sun-Times]

Aerogrow

Here's a little something for burgeoning urban gardeners and those without green thumbs alike. We featured AeroGrow's aeroponics system back in the day, before it was available for sale; we're happy to say that it has finally arrived. With it comes your ability to grow vegetables, greens, herbs and the like in your kitchen (or just about anywhere indoors) by suspending plant roots in the air, rather than soil or water. The suspended plants derive their nutrients from the air; with the help of the "smart" lighting and nutrient-cycling that comes with the garden, the company claims accelerated growth and increased yields over hydroponics and traditional outdoor gardening. Skeptical? They even guarantee a harvest after 28 days. AeroGrow also offers seed kits to go with the garden, including things like chili peppers, gourmet herbs, cherry tomatoes and strawberries; the garden goes for \$149.95 and the seed kits are \$19.95, available through their website and selected retailers like Sur La Table.

Source: [Treehugger]





Shower Curtains

You like it hot. Hot and steamy. Spine-tingling, really. So much so that it takes you to a place far, far away.

Mind out of the gutter, please. Focus. We're talking about a shower, here. Namely, a shower behind an Izola shower curtain.

Inspired by a passion for photography and art, the vinyl curtains were created to bring a little something extra to your time in la toilette. Step behind a romantic cityscape of Paris, Rome, or Venice. Or, if your tastes run a little more abstract, hang a limited-edition piece from the likes of Patrick McMullan, Faile, or Christopher Makos — whom Andy Warhol once crowned the most modern photographer in America.

Source: [DailyCandy]

Maxi Mambo

Maxi seat pleasure, maxi design fun: The Maxi Mambo gives your reception area, your lounge or your trade-fair booth the finishing touch. Just like our popular Mambo stool, this seat is made of resilient transparent polypropylene. Choose blue, red or clear. Its large, round seat is attached to a silver-painted steel base.

Source: [Topdeq]



Emotional Seats



Want more furniture like the mood light furniture that changes colors as per your mood, then I bet you will be completely mesmerized with the Animi Causa's "Feel Seating System" which can change its form according to the emotional state of the body! The Feel gathers all positions in one object. The shape of the stunning seating system is inspired by a molecular structure. The feel seating system is made of 120 soft balls covered with elastic fabric. The molecular structure allows the chair to create multiple positions that you can't even think off!

Source: [BornRich]

Devine Color

Schauffler, creator of the high-end Devine Color brand of interior house paints, plans to expand her \$10 million annual business by introducing a line of custom window coverings she calls corsets: valances that hug the top of window frames and transform into full-length draperies by zipping on skirts of different hues and textures.

Her approach to the product illustrates why Schauffler has transformed in a few years from stay-at-home suburban mom to a businesswoman whose products have national reach. To get a precise fit, she hired an apparel company to shape the window treatments — making the corset moniker more than just a marketing ploy.

"We decided to tailor the window with color," Schauffler says, predicting this corset will liberate women who tell her they have few good choices beyond lower-end, unlined window panels and fussy fabric-store treatments that don't convey the modern look they crave.

Source: [USATODAY.com]

New Bathroom Cabinet

The latest product to be rolled out in the Rifco product line is the Metro line of cabinets, using the unique design of a side opening in which the shelves slide from behind the attached, fixed mirror. The advantage of this is that the mirror reflection is retained while the user accesses anything from within the cabinet.

All parts are high moisture resistant, while the two fully adjustable wire basked shelves ensure maximum efficiency of space is achieved. The sides of the cabinet are available in gloss, while bevelled mirrors are a stylish option.



Source: [infoLink.com.au]

Lifestyle & Luxury

One Stop Cut

Would you believe me if I were to tell you there was a place where one could get a haircut, a shave, shop and enjoy a cocktail? Well for you Chicagoans, this might just be your lucky day. Guise, located on Halsted in Lincoln Park, is the creation of Brad Habansky who was looking to create a one-stop shop where men felt comfortable; and that he did. In the front of this swank establishment is numerous barber chairs each featuring their very own plasma television. The main draw for me is the comfort of being able to get a good haircut (*cough* and manicure) and not have to worry about looking to prissy in front of your female counterparts, but the shopping at Guise is not too shabby either.



Source: [Josh Spears]

Ready Daddy

As a young father, I hate the stereotype you often see on television and commercials of the bumbling dad. Does it take us a touch longer to pick up some skills when it comes to child-rearing? Sure, but that doesn't mean that we remain bumbling for the rest of our lives. I always enjoy when I come across products that are made for fathers, and also keep us better organized without making us feel like idiots. The Daddy's Tool Bag does all these things, and at \$45 is also affordable.

The bag has a nice, manly look, and includes all the pockets and flaps you'd expect from a good diaper bag. The real value comes from the included vinyl changing mat, as well as a video that gives good step-by-step instructions on things such as bottles, diapering, car seats, and other baby skills.

Source: [Babygadget]



SkyVentureArizona



2006's Best Business Ideas

Catering to those thrill seekers with an aversion to heights, airplanes, or both, **SkyVenture** boasts a true skydiving experience – without going outside. Resembling a space station smack in the middle of a desert landscape, the Arizona location features a vertical wind tunnel 14 feet in diameter and 15 feet long, with wind speeds of 150 mph to simulate a free falling experience. No prior skydiving is necessary, and potential “jumpers” need only a 20 minute training to participate. For interested flyers not located in the Eloy area, SkyVenture has facilities all over the country and around the world, so now there's no excuse not to jump.

Source: [TrendCentral]

Chumby



If Chumby, maker of this rugby ball-sized computer by the same name, has its way, then it will replace all of our bedside digital clocks with a stripped-down computer stuffed in a cuddly exterior case. Apparently the Chumby is designed to be a little hackable nugget that will play Flash applications (known in Chumby-speak as “widgets”) that can do various other things like (you guessed it): play music, check your RSS feeds, and display your photos. Inside this little furball is a 266 MHz CPU, 32MB SDRAM, 64MB Flash RAM, 320 x 240 3-inch screen, two USB ports, 2W speakers, and WiFi.

Source: [Engadget]

Armed Ladies



A unique artistic fusion of two genders - feminine embellishments to the masculine weapons! Antonio Riello has spruced up of real military weapons into fashion items for ladies. Ladies

Weapons are born from the most outstanding contemporary Italian features: the obsession for personal security and the passion for elegance and fashion. Contemporary military weaponry is restyled by the artist as high fashion accessories for sophisticated ladies. Using leopard skins, brightly lacquered colors, inset jewels and fake furs, Antonio creates a range of specialized items for wives of mafia bosses, arms dealers, sophisticated ladies and exigent soldiers.

Source: [LuxuryLaunches.com]

Media Immersion



All cities takes a toll, and at times all city dwellers have to take their leave. When life in Istanbul gets too stressful, people can head to the baths. In Rio there's the beach. In Tokyo, though, the antidote to urban overload is more of the same. In the world's most media-saturated city, people take a break by checking themselves into media immersion pods: warrens cluttered with computers, TV's, video games and every other entertainment of the electronic age.

The Bagus Gran Cyber Cafés are Tokyo's grand temples of infomania. Situated well above retail level, on the odd floor number where in Manhattan you might find tarot readers or nail salons, these establishments contain row after row of anonymous cubicles. At first glance the spread looks officelike, but be warned: these places are drug dens for Internet addicts.

The first Gran Cyber Café opened in 1999. Today there are 10, serving some 5,000 people a day. Each has a slightly different orientation — some are geared to teenagers, some to salarymen — but the atmosphere is the same throughout the franchise: equal parts lending library, newsstand, arcade, Kinko's and youth hostel. An inspired extension of the basic Internet cafe, the Gran Cyber Cafés shift their meaning the more you study them, as if by a trick of their trademark low light.

Source: [The New York Times]

Butterfly from American Express



AMEX has introduced the the new Butterfly card. It is a stylish new companion exclusively for American Express® Gold Card members. The Butterfly card works interchangeably with your traditional American Express® Gold Card. Even though it has a different Card number, it's linked to your regular Card account with all the same benefits and services.

Source: [American Express]

Luxury Bed + TV



What could be better than watching TV in bed? How about watching TV in bed on a TV that's built into the bed? Using a wireless remote, you can activate the TV that rises out of the foot of the bed like a display-screen in some James Bond villain's hideout.

The TV is only 22", but it should be large enough since it's so close to you. Also built into the bed, an electronic leveling system. The only downside, as it usually is with cool products, is the price. \$25,900 for this bed. We don't think many people would buy a bed that's worth more than their cars.

Source: [PORTALINO]

Pampered Doggies

Would you make any much-loved family member sleep on the floor on a lumpy pillow? That's the logic driving a new generation of high-end dog beds that feature not only frames, but luxe mattresses and decorator themes befitting not a doghouse, but

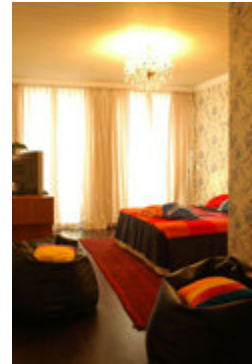


the room of a pampered child. From the Asian-themed Saigon Day Bed Frame (\$300) and Pampered Puppy's "Furari" dog bed (\$250) to SSS Petcare's wrought-iron frame (\$127-\$163) and pillow-topped mattress (\$250-\$420), there's nothing about these canine crash pads that says "dog's life." Then again, with a good night's sleep on the radar for human health, how could Fido's sweet dreams be far behind?

Source: Iconoculture

Art Hotels

The trend in hotels with themed rooms seems to be spreading like a rash, with hotels in Denmark, UK, Berlin, Paris & Madrid. The clever concept sees different artists and designers commissioned to fit out each room, or in the case of the Madrid hotel, entire floors. The idea is to give guests a completely different experience to the guest next door. The latest hotel to join in the trend is the Reflections hotel in Bangkok. Each of the 30 rooms has been created by a different designer or artist in everything from stylish deco style right through to crazy kitsch, which can make you feel as though you've stepped into a fantastical abstract painting. It's fun and definitely not for the minimal-lovin faint hearted.



Source: [The Cool Hunter]

Drinks for Dogs



Vitamin fortified, flavored bottled water specifically formulated for dogs has been introduced under the titles of Puddle Water, Hose Water, Gutter Water and Toilet Water. The Original K9 Vita Water(tm) is fortified with vitamins such as A, B, C and manganese, and conveniently packaged in colorful, 1/2 liter, recyclable bottles, according to Don Magier, CEO, K9 Water Co. Inc. It is available at <http://www.k9waterco.com>, or check with your local pet store.

"Each variety is specifically formulated to provide your dog with essential vitamins that contribute to overall good health while providing the hydration that dogs need," says Magier.

The Original K9 Vita Water can be enjoyed in four of the flavors dogs enjoy most: chicken, beef, liver and lamb. "Dogs are raving that it's REBARKABLY REFRESHING!" Magier says. "As animal lovers and pooch parents ourselves, we're committed to producing the highest quality product we possibly can for dogs to enjoy. We use only purified water, human grade vitamins and no artificial colors. Our formula is the result of tests conducted by an independent veterinary nutritionist to ensure daily consumption levels are safe and accurate," says Magier.

The founders of K9 Water Co., Inc. believe that one of the best things you can do for your dog's health is also one of the easiest -- provide sufficient hydration and essential nutrients with The Original K9 Vita Water. Magier calls it "a delicious treat that can help maintain healthy skin and coat, and can also help maintain consistent energy levels and production of collagen." He says it is a tasty alternative to pills and chalky powders.

Source: [K9 Water Co]

Silent Squeak

The Soniks have arrived to revolutionize the squeaky dog toy forever with their exclusive "Silent Squeak" technology only dogs can hear.

The whole family of toys contains an ultrasonic squeaker that emits sound in a range above the hearing of humans but just right for playful dogs! Introduce your dog to the silent but spunky Sonik toy family: Proud parents SubSonik and SuperSonik, trendy and troubled teenagers, UltraSonik and HyperSonik, and the trusted family pets Woofer and Tweeter.



For more innovative and high tech pet products, explore petgadgets.com.

Source: Petgadgets.com

Wind Workout



Windjector from Dosho Design uses air resistance to provide a cardio workout, stretching, and strengthening of the core muscles. The twenty-nine core muscles are crucial for improving athletic performance as well as for performing everyday activities. Windjector use of air resistance allows each individual to work out at his own pace. The faster you move, the more resistance you encounter, and the harder you work out.

Windjector provides training for the cardiovascular, respiratory, muscular endurance, and muscular strength systems. This workout helps improve flexibility, agility, and mobility.

Source: [Yenra]

Homes That Rotate

Perfect for entertaining and personal enjoyment a RotatingHome may be just right for you. No longer will you need to decide which rooms will have a great view and which rooms will have minimal view or no view at all - the RotatingHome allows you to see your entire view from all the major rooms in your home! If you prefer to enjoy your view in the open air, a rotating deck can surround the entire circumference or just part of your home. A RotatingHome can be built in any size or shape with all or part of the home turning and it can have any number of stories with one or all rotating. The structure can turn a 100 times in one direction or a 1,000 in the other or stop in any position while always being connected to all utilities, just like any other home. You can choose the speed it rotates, we recommend a variable speed from one revolution in 30 minutes to one revolution in 24 hours. This is all made possible by the truly unique and patented SWIVEL at the heart of the home.



A rotating home is perfect for an upscale beach house or large mountain cabin or even in areas prone to storm surges! Steep mountain terrain is not a problem as the RotatingHome can be built up on a central steel column. With only one fully Rotating Home that meets 21st century building codes currently in existence, the uniqueness and technology are unprecedented!

Source: [RotatingHome.com]

The AeroPress Coffee Machine

You'd think we would have already perfected the best way to produce a cup of coffee from coffee beans, but several years of research by Stanford University mechanical engineering lecturer Alan Adler (the inventor of the Aerobie flying disk which holds the world throwing record of more than a quarter mile) appear to have found a better coffee machine.

Independent reviews suggest the new Aerobie AeroPress delivers the smoothest, richest, purest and fastest cup of coffee (under 30 seconds) you're likely to find and the bonus is that the AeroPress costs just US\$30.

Source: [Gizmag]

Cardio Tennis

Tennis can be a great workout if you have skilled, competitively matched partners playing singles. For others, the game is more stop than go, sprinkled with cuss-muttering frustration: hit, run, whack ball into net, stop. Hit, return, re-return(!), stop, curse, hail taxi to retrieve errant shot, etc. Entertaining, yes, even social. But not a heart-rate booster.

Cardio Tennis, a national program being offered at a variety of venues in the Washington area, seeks to change that. The workout runs participants around the court urgently enough to keep their heart rates in the cardio-training zone (65 to 85 percent of maximum heart rate) while helping improve tennis skills. It's billed as similar to an interval workout. Armed with a racquet, a watch and my well-honed ability to count heart beats via my carotid artery, I showed up to give it a try.

On an indoor court at Sport Fit Bowie in Bowie, instructor Kevin McClure starts me and four other participants with warm-up footwork moves followed by a repeating drill in which we hustle from one spot to another, squaring up to imaginary balls and swinging imaginary racquets, culminating in a phantom overhead slam down a nonexistent opponent's throat. No unforced errors!

Source: [WashingtonPost.com]

Vacation Homes



Many people dream of owning a vacation home. But often concerns about maintaining it, renting it out in the off-season, or even justifying the expense when it's only to be used for a couple weeks of the year keep people from making the dream a reality.

Now comes along condo hotels, a new type of vacation home ownership that provides solutions to all these problems. Condo hotels enable you to own a luxury vacation home at a world-class resort and receive rent revenue whenever you're not using it.

So how do condo hotels differ from owning a traditional vacation apartment or condominium? First of all, these are not your typical second homes. They are beautifully furnished condominium suites in some of the most prestigious hotels and resorts around the country. The properties often feature four- or five-star amenities ranging from full-service spas and fitness centers to concierge services, business centers and fine-dining restaurants.

Condo hotels are operated by big-brand management companies such as Hyatt, Ritz-Carlton, Sonesta, Starwood, Hilton, Trump and Rosewood. Typically they are high-rise luxury hotels located on prime land overlooking the ocean or a golf course, near popular theme parks or attractions, or in the heart of a booming downtown. Prices for condo hotel units range from \$250,000 to over \$1 million for top properties.

Here's what makes the condo hotel concept so appealing. When you're not using your condo hotel unit, you have the option of placing it into the hotel's rental program. You receive 40%-60% of the revenue your unit generates (it varies by property), with the balance going to the hotel operator. While the hotel operator doesn't guarantee the rental of the unit, by capitalizing on the hotel's brand name, big league advertising, national affiliations, centralized reservation system and management expertise, unit owners typically receive a higher level of rental income than they would from a traditional vacation home. More importantly, ownership is 100 percent hassle-free, as the hotel operator takes care of renting and maintaining the unit as well as managing the property's many amenities.



How are the ownership expenses split? As part of the rental agreement, the hotel pays for most operating expenses such as housekeeping, administrative and marketing. The condo hotel owner typically pays for real estate taxes, insurance and capital improvements. The rental revenue that owners receive helps defray these expenses and, in some cases, provides additional income.

While developers primarily sell their condo hotel units as a lifestyle and vacation home alternative, many buyers see merit in the condo hotel concept as an investment tool. They say it gives them the best of both worlds. They can enjoy all of the amenities of vacationing in a first-class resort while having ownership of a real estate investment that has potential to appreciate.

Source: [\[Condo Hotel Center\]](#)

iTrain: Your Personal MP3 Trainer



If you've exhausted your Awesome Workout Mix and can't seem to find the right motivational soundtrack to hit your stride on the treadmill, these exercise MP3 downloads may be just the thing. Designed by yoga/Pilates guru Grace Lazenby along with a team of Hollywood personal trainers, there are 11 different workouts ranging from iStretch to iSculpt Ballet. Each one is a personal training session/soundtrack that you can purchase and store on your MP3 player. You won't have anyone to serve as your therapist or to yell at when you feel like you're about to break, but you also won't have an excuse to not work out when you're away on vacation.

Source: [TrendCentral]



Lost and Found

A lost wallet is something you almost instantly pick up and examine if encountered on the street. You might pick it up because you're a good Samaritan or you just want to see if there's cash in there for the taking.

The latest ad stunt for the movie "Du och Jag (you & I)" involved spreading wallets in the streets of Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmo which have fake ID's for the movie's star Niklas Andersson. I have to say the idea is clever, definitely unique, and a good way of trick-promotion someone without making them upset.

Source: [Caffeine Marketing]

Funeral Marketing

Marketing Magazine: Shakespeare in the Park plays, gospel concerts, bird watching, tree hugging, historical walking tours, jogging and picnics are not the first things that spring to mind when you think of cemeteries and funerals. But for Mount Royal Commemorative Services, on Montreal's Mount Royal, it's all part of bringing life to an industry long known for its deadly dull marketing.

Armed with research by Pollara, which found the single biggest thing consumers want from the funeral/ cemetery industry is information, "we decided to (use) our marketing efforts to say we're committed to educating Montrealers and consumers about the funeral and cemetery profession,"

says Tim Thompson, director of marketing for the non-profit cemetery and funeral complex. "We took the approach of trying to demystify the business."

Thompson, who worked in sales in the Montreal radio business for 17 years and had a brief stint in 1996 as vice-president, sales and marketing of the Montreal Alouettes, came to Mount Royal to set up its sales and marketing division.

Source: [Marketing Magazine]

Compelling Ad

ANI has appointed DZP Marketing Communications to lead the strategic development and repositioning of Atkins Advantage. DZP has designed a new national print campaign designed to articulate the Atkins Advantage: a unique nutrition advantage versus the competition: high fiber, high protein, vitamins, minerals, low sugar, and no trans fats.

"Our new management has streamlined operations and built a foundation for strong financial performance, enabling us to invest in the new DZP campaign which educates consumers about the nutrition advantage of our great-tasting Atkins Advantage bars and shakes," said Neumann.

"Today's consumers are better educated about nutrition than ever before; we feel Atkins Advantage provides exactly what they are looking for: better taste and better nutrition versus the competition," said Neumann. "DZP's insights and creative solutions have resulted in a comprehensive, integrated campaign that clearly positions Atkins Advantage nutrition bars and shakes."



Source: [Yenra]

Graffiti Ads

The images are painted directly onto building walls in urban areas, graffiti-style. Wide-eyed kids, portrayed in a stylized, comic-book rendering, pose with a mysterious, hand-size gadget. One licks his like a lollipop. Another is playing paddleball with the thing.

What looks like artful vandalism, though, is really part of a guerrilla marketing campaign for Sony's PlayStation Portable, a device that can play games, music and movies.

In major cities such as San Francisco, Miami and New York, Sony has paid building owners to use wall space for the campaign, and the images have become a familiar sight. It's the latest effort by a big corporation to capitalize on the hot world of street art to reach an urban market that has learned to tune out traditional advertising.

Nike Inc., Time magazine and even stodgy International Business Machines Corp. are among the growing list of companies that have dabbled in street art to get their marketing messages out. The trend makes some artists squeamish even as others start marketing firms or open galleries. In Washington's Adams Morgan neighborhood, cell phone maker Nokia Corp. used sidewalk

chalk drawings to promote its N-Gage, a cell phone aimed at gamers, when it launched the product in 2003.

Source: [BizReport.com]

Media & Publishing

Eupinion

The Eupinion (EUrope oPINION) is the innovated and unique newspaper (digital media concept software), based on real citizen journalism concept. The main goal is to build a community of top columnists, writing on any global issue (politics, business, fashion and trends, sports etc). We are based in Slovenia -- EU, but our services are available to news publishers and writers worldwide. As a business, Marketer Media generates revenue by providing advertisers with the opportunity to deliver measurable, cost-effective advertising that is based on new D2D or D2C concepts. Advertisers use our advertising program to promote their products and services with direct targeted advertising.

Source: [Marketer Media]

Your Own Radio Station

Commuters and road trippers already know that satellite radio makes gridlock more tolerable, and Sirius is still continuing to spread their innovation wings. Their latest development, D.I.Y. Radio invites listeners to create and host their own customized national radio show — uncensored and commercial-free. A different listener will take the reins every week. If you're still bummed that the local radio station failed to play your request for the Top 5 at 9 back in 5th grade (not that we're bitter or anything), this is way better.

Source: [TrendCentral]

Novels for Cellphones

In Japan, cellphones have become a tool for writing and reading e-mail messages. Now, publishers in Japan want mobile subscribers to read more than simple text messages.

Publishers like Shinchosha and Kodansha and their distribution partner have been bolstering readership for novels and comics on cellphones. According to Shinchosha, cellphone users are gravitating to authors like Mika Naito, who writes romantic novels popular with women in their 20s and 30s. Naito's 2004 novel "Love Link" recorded 1.5 million paid accesses over a six-month period in which it was serially distributed. Another of her novels, "Love*," posted free on a mobile Web site, received 14 million accesses over six months.

Source: [IHT]

Liquid Mag

Step into liquid. Imbibe magazine covers everything from cocktails to wine to beer to juice to coffee to tea. The motto: All that's fit to drink.



The premiere issue of the bimonthly publication features hot chocolate and mezcal in Oaxaca, great hotel bars around the country, Trappist ales and organic wines.

A handy guide to every imbibing opportunity will whet whistles through inspiration and empowerment.

Source: [Iconoculture]

Foreign Tunes

DailyCandy: Q. What do the following lyrics have in common?

- a) I would walk 500 miles.
- b) Who let the dogs out?
- c) You oughtta know.

A. There's a really good chance they are now going to be stuck in your head all day. (Sorry.) But you can use Earworms to get them out — and learn *quelque chose* while you're at it. Like a catchy tune that you just can't shake, Earworms Musical Brain Trainers layer basic foreign words and phrases over pleasant instrumental tracks. After listening to the songs a few times, you'll find that you've picked up some useful lingo. Download 75-minute lessons in German, Greek, Italian, Spanish, and French. (Chinese is offered only on CD.) Portuguese, Arabic, Japanese, and Russian are coming soon. By July, volume two of all of the languages will be released.

Source: [DailyCandy]



Cellphone Watch

Just in case the m300 looks familiar, your brain probably remembered Samsung's prototype cellphone watch instead which was never released commercially. The m300 GSM cellphone watch is the first one out in the market, with features that range from USB and Bluetooth connectivity to a 99 phone number book. Battery life is not too shabby with a 70 hour standby time. The m300 will be available worldwide in time for Christmas, so you can pre-order yours today.

Source: [UberPhones]

The Invisible Code

On September 13, Fujitsu unveiled a new type of “invisible” barcode, called FP (Fine Picture) code, which allows data to be embedded directly into color print photographs. FP code consists of a series of faint yellow lines — said to be invisible to the naked eye — which are overlaid on the photograph during the printing process. Once encoded, a photograph can retain its original quality while serving as an “object hyperlink” to websites that users can access via mobile phone.

To use FP code, users must first download special free software to their camera-equipped phone. Then, when the camera is used to take a picture of an encoded photograph, the code is sent to a server where it is converted into URL data, which is used to



connect the user's mobile phone to the corresponding website. Text, video and audio content can then be delivered directly to the user's phone.

Source: [Pink Tentacle]

Mobile Concert

Are you going to miss the Rolling Stones playing Paris on July 28? Well, if you're a Cingular Wireless subscriber, you don't have to. Cingular is using innovative new technology that lets its customers dial a number that connects them to a live feed of the Stones rocking the Stade de France, in Paris. A buck ninety-nine gets you seven minutes of Jagger & Co. The clarity depends, in part, on the quality of your phone's speakers. But the call isn't to some Stones groupie holding up a phone from the bleachers. This connection goes straight to the band's mixing board. So, "the sound quality is superior," says Anthony Macaluso, founder of Single Touch Interactive, which developed the listen-live technology Cingular is using.

Here's how it works: Interested users register for the concert ahead of time by pressing pound (#) and 106, then hitting the send button as if they were making a call. Callers then confirm that they want the service. That's it. When the concert is about to begin, they get an automated call on their mobile phone letting them know the concert is starting. If you miss the call, you can dial pound 106 and tap right into the concert. You can also register on the Web at www.listenlivenow.com.

Source: [BusinessWeek]

Tattooed Handphones



When you talk about mid- and high-end mobile phones these days, it's tough not to mention the RAZR name, the line of products that made Motorola's mark on the map so explosive. With its popularity, the RAZR has become available in all sorts of different colors, even pink. But now, Motorola wants you to be able to customize your super sleek phone even more.

Motorola has teamed up with tattoo artist extraordinaire, Ami James, to create new versions of the RAZR that will have laser-etched images from James embedded onto the outside casing of the phone.

Source: [14U News]

Laundry Time

Whirlpool today began testing "smart" washing machines and dryers, monitored and controlled from computers and cell phones.

The pilot project, called "Laundry Time," is part of an open collaboration involving Whirlpool Corporation, Hewlett Packard, Microsoft, Panasonic and Procter & Gamble.

To be conducted in Atlanta homes between today and early September, Laundry Time is built around a connected laundry solution that links a washer and dryer to a home network and sends text messages about the laundry's progress to a computer, TV and/or cell phone. The technology lets consumers manage the laundry process from remote locations such as a grocery store or soccer game, freeing them up to go about their day rather than forcing them to stay home to manage the process.

Source: [Mobiledia]

Repellent Ringtone

When it came out in Britain in December, the Mosquito sound system was supposed to be the sonic equivalent of a "no loitering" sign. Its annoying, high-pitched sound -- which many adults can't hear but most young people can -- would act as a teen repellent.



Now, teens are staging a worldwide rebellion: Downloading the sound, or another ring tone in that same high-frequency range, allows them to hear their cellphones ring when their parents and teachers (mostly) cannot.

And the company that brought the Mosquito to market -- Compound Security Systems Ltd. of Britain -- is being barraged by a new market of companies wanting to sell a line of subversive ring tones.

"When we brought out the teenager repellent to market, we really didn't think anybody would be interested in ring tones" in the same frequency, said Simon Morris, marketing and commercial director for Compound Security, who has been fielding hundreds of calls from companies and journalists around the world since the annoying ring tone became popular.

Source: [WashingtonPost.com]

Nu Mobile



myNuMo is a new teen-oriented, online community with a similar model for user-created mobile phone content. The site offers users the tools to create and publish ringtones, wallpapers, and of course, videos. Members can then profit from their creations by uploading them to their own custom webpage within the site where they can then sell them by using a text-message 'shortcode'.

Although it's in the beta testing stage right now, myNuMo could eventually become a valuable source for young music and art creatives to gain exposure, promote themselves and hopefully, make a little cash on the side too.

Source: [TrendCentral]

Tag it and Share!



Codes for consumers, not producers, is one thing, but in an open source, CUSTOMER MADE world, what about codes by consumers? Check out Singapore based Tagit, who have developed a universal decoding engine which runs on an open platform, meaning that all types of digitized codes, from the QR Code and the humble 2D DataMatrix to Tagit's own proprietary Tagit.Code can be decoded. But that's not all: the DIY side of the business is **Tagit's KoolTag**: "You can create a KoolTag for any message you want to communicate to your friends. If you want your girlfriend to see a special secret image, or if you want to share a private video clip with your friends, all you need to do is to create a KoolTag on this site, print it out, email it or just stick it on a t-shirt to attract attention. All that's needed is a cameraphone to capture the KoolTag which lets you see the private content. KoolTag is free!"

Source: [Trendwatching.com]

Mobile Commerce from PayPal

The move by PayPal, a unit of online auctioneer eBay Inc., marks a big step in further bridging the worlds of electronic commerce and brick-and-mortar stores, by giving consumers a pay option via telephone.

PayPal Mobile lets consumers instantly buy goods and services, such as compact discs, DVDs and apparel, by sending product codes via text message.

PayPal signed up News Corp.'s 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, NBC Universal's Bravo, Viacom Inc.'s MTV, and the NBA Store for its Text to Buy service.

"The promise of mobile commerce has never been stronger," PayPal's chief Executive Jeff Jordan said as he introduced the service in a keynote speech at the CTIA wireless show. Jordan cited the popularity of online payments and the prevalence of mobile phones as reasons why consumers are more open to making payments using their cellphone than eight years ago when PayPal first tried offering a mobile payment service.

Source: [BizReport.com]

No Spying

Espionage agents, paranoid conspiracy theorists and others prizing their privacy have cause to thank Marian Kechlibar.

Kechlibar, 27, and his friend Jiří Šatánek, 31, have devised a new program that codes text, or SMS, messages so that no third party — police, secret service, even mobile phone operators — can read them.

"We felt that there is too much phone tapping going on in this country," says Šatánek. "Everyone has a right to their privacy."

Outside it's a cold Karlín evening. But inside the three-room, wood-paneled Prague 8 headquarters of CircleTech, a company that creates mobile phone software, it's warm and cozy. And quiet.

Kechlibar, his long hair tied in a low ponytail, reclines in a mustard-colored plush armchair. Šatánek is there, too. Speaking in low, polite tones, both men sound excited in their own restrained ways.

Their program, appropriately named **SMS 007**, is one of the first of its kind that can be installed into most cell phones. The two are working on a version that codes regular cell phone conversations as well, and they hope to release it next summer.

Source: [The Prague Post Online]

Cellphone Responsibility

Through its **Off the Hook program**, Cell-Phones-n-Plans offers teens hankering for cellphones a way to show parents they're serious about cellular responsibilities. The free program includes prewritten e-mails teens can send to parents explaining that they understand cell responsibilities and a teen/parent contract stipulating things like allowed monthly minutes, phone etiquette, and required discussion of bills with parents.



Parents aren't pushovers. Teens who honestly show willingness to shoulder responsibility for actions and bills stand a better chance of winning parents' cellular rewards, while also picking up money-management skills. Teens have purchasing power, but Captain Mom still exerts some control. Include parents in the picture when targeting teens to reach both decision makers.

Source: [Iconoculture]



SMS and Date

Predictive text software developer Tegic and love author John Gray offer the top-ten tips to help ensure a successful union of texting and dating in 2006.

It's no secret that text messaging is on the rise. In fact, even texting to share amorous thoughts is on the upswing, according to the first annual T9 Texting Outlook Survey. Sixty percent of those who sent text messages have sent one to tell someone they love them or miss them.

"Sending a text is a great way to get to know someone better and to let them know you are thinking of them. Text messages are an informal and fun way of communicating," said Dr. Gray. T9 predictive text software anticipates the word that a user is entering as they press a key just once for each letter. For example, keying love requires just four keystrokes (5-6-8-3) instead of eleven when tapping out letters individually. And Valentine can be reached in only nine steps.

Source: [Yenra]

Scented Phones



Your phone is reeking. Japan's Keitai KunKun smelltones release subtle (yet unmistakable) aromas like Berry and Wild Nature. There's even a special blend for Hello Kitty. The smelly celly accessories are triggered by the signal of an incoming call, e-mail, or text message. Keitai KunKun isn't the only tech company following its nose: Singapore's Nice Smell Kaori-chan Perfume Straps for cellphones emit sweet (and savory) scents like Jasmine, Curry, and English Tea with every ring.

Source: [Iconoculture]

Mobile Boutiques

Xavel Inc. has a client base marketing gurus dream about.

When they're done shopping, customers are in the habit of e-mailing their friends to pass on a recommendation.

The Tokyo-based fashion retailer operates a cellphone shopping site, not a conventional outlet. It means the referred customer can be making the same purchase within minutes.

Net effect: Projected sales of between 7 billion and 8 billion yen for the year through September from its mail-order operations, 50 percent more than in the previous year.

This kind of word-of-mouth advertising is not only ringing up profits for Xavel, it is helping to create a new industry.

Annual sales from mobile shopping are nearing 1 trillion yen in Japan. Downloads of screen images and ringtones continue to dominate cellphone showcases. But fashion and other conventional retail ware are starting to get cyber shelf space. Young women are leading the charge into mobile shopping. Xavel's site shows it knows who its customers are. It is sprinkled with whimsical pictures and symbols.

Source: [ChannelNewsAsia.com]

Money & Finance

SpoozToolz

Spooz, Inc. announced today it will launch its flagship product, SpoozToolz(TM), at 4:00 PM CST. As pre-cursor to the product launch, Spooz will publish its e-commerce website, www.spooztoolz.com, earlier in the afternoon.

Spooz, Inc., a publicly traded company based in Chicago, provides a suite of solutions designed to simplify financial trading for traders and hedgers alike. SpoozToolz(TM) and its modules, the Company's flagship products, add built-in trading capabilities to the popular Microsoft(R) Excel software application, combining a customizable interface, streaming quotes, charts, technical analysis, a comprehensive historical database, and electronic trade execution into a simple add-in that becomes part of the Excel tool bar.

Source: [dBusinessNews]

Nanotechnology

Cellphones-free Paint

NaturalNano has used nanotechnology to develop a type of paint that stops cellphone signals. It's done by blending particles of copper that are inserted into nanotubes, and then mixing and suspending these tiny particles into a can of paint.

NaturalNano's idea is to completely block cellphone signals with this paint, and then provide a radio filtering device that will allow wireless signals to pass through only when they're appropriate. Using this system, a theater owner could allow cellphone signals before the show or during an intermission, but completely block them during the movie. At the same time, that theater owner could still allow emergency radio communications to get through. While jamming of cellphone signals has been ruled illegal by the FCC, it's not a crime to passively prevent signals from passing through, which is exactly what NaturalNano's paint does.

Source: [Gizmodo]

Big Nano Future

In 2029, people and computers will be "intimately connected" in profound ways, thanks to breakthrough advances in artificial intelligence, nanotechnology and a soon-to-be-acquired knowledge of the human brain.

That's according to futurist Ray Kurzweil, who spoke Feb. 7 at the Technology Association of Georgia's annual summit in Smyrna. Kurzweil, author of "The Age of Spiritual Machines" and inventor of the speech-to-text synthesizer, predicts scientists by 2029 will have created "nanobots" capable of repairing the human body from within and immersing the five senses in full virtual reality environments. Nanobots also will be able to make us smarter too, he predicts: improving memory, sensory and cognitive abilities.

Just around the corner -- in 2009 -- people will have fast Internet connections at all times in all places thanks to advances in small, mobile electronics embedded in clothing and in the

environment. "Computers will disappear," he said, as visiting a Web site will become a mobile, virtual reality experience and "displays will be written directly on our retinas" from eyeglasses and contact lenses.

Source: [Atlanta Business Chronicle]

Non-Profit & Charity

Ethical Rings

A growing trend in the UK, brides are the latest consumer group to go socially conscious. Many brides-to-be don't want to shatter their fantasy diamond with the reality that the diamond industry is often linked to funding civil war and child soldiers in African countries such as Angola, Sierra Leone, and Congo. Thus, young couples are opting for ethical "conflict free" rings. UK jewelry company Cred is committed to providing a fair trade alternative for conscious couples. Becoming the ultimate marriage status symbol, the company only works with small scale mining communities like Oro Verde where human rights and fair labor standards are carefully monitored. There is even a rumor that fashion designer Katherine Hamnett is launching an ethical engagement ring.



Source: [TrendCentral]

Ecomiles

Airline miles are nice, but wouldn't you feel better about splurging on a new flat-panel TV if you were helping to save endangered species? That's the idea behind Ecomiles, a rewards program where the points translate into charitable donations.

Members simply log on to Ecomiles's e-commerce portal, which links up with Barnes & Noble (Charts), eBay (Charts), Hotwire, and more than 800 other sites that award ecomiles for purchases. The miles are redeemed for dollars, which members can contribute to any of 12 charities, including the World Wildlife Fund and economic development groups such as SOS Children's Villages.

"We essentially wanted to establish a global development currency," says Marcus Courage, Ecomiles's chief marketing officer and the managing director of Africappractice, a corporate citizenship consultancy.

Helping people make a difference

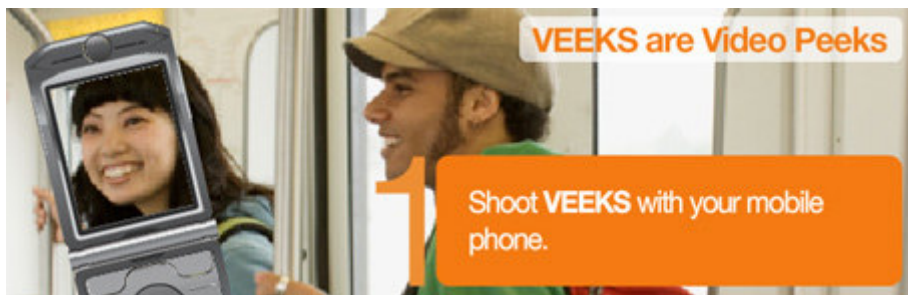
For-profit Ecomiles was founded in 2004 by a South African entrepreneur named Gustav Erlank and the VC firm Madagascar Development Partners. Ecomiles works with the United Nations Development Program to pinpoint charitable groups and projects in need of funding. Though not yet profitable, the startup generates revenue by taking a small percentage of each transaction and selling advertising on its website.

The company now has nearly 10,000 members, who can distribute their contributions among the different charities however they choose. Ecomiles even sends users regular updates to let them track the progress of their pet projects.

Source: [Business 2.0]

Online & Social Network

Veeker Video Peeks



You may soon hear people saying "VM me" rather than "IM me". **Veeker** is a free video messaging service that enables a camera phone owner to shoot video and instantly share it with friends. Videos are sent directly to the Veeker site, where, similar to Flickr, the creator can opt to keep it private or to share with the Veeker community. The "Veeks" or "video peeks" can also be viewed in other blogging and social networking sites that accept embed codes.

Source: [TrendCentral]

Blog Radio Show

Taking heated comment section feuds (when readers pick fights with bloggers and other readers in a blog's comment section) even further, bloggers and podcasters now have the chance to engage in direct discourse with their devoted readers and/or listeners—this time, via live listener call-in segments. Often described as "podcasting 2.0," a site called BlogTalkRadio enables registered users to schedule show times and receive callers through an assigned phone number, foregoing the more traditional broadcasting routes that required radio stations and producers.



Source: [TrendCentral]

Temp Social Networks

From giants MySpace and Facebook to niche sites Sneakerplay and SportsMates, it seems almost every group has a place to connect online. Adding a new twist to the basic social networking platform are the following temporary sites, which utilize user profiles as a basis for stardom and give members the power to decide who they want to see on the big screen.

Islanddoo: The concept behind this site is to find candidates for the UK reality TV show Shipwrecked (similar to Survivor). Users of this temporary site create a profile with photo and video and can then opt to become a fan of other users. The profiles that attract the most fans score an audition for the show. And it's generating serious buzz—just two weeks after its launch, the site garnered 800,000 daily page views.



Source: [TrendCentral]

Drivers' Romance

Philips switched from a 9-to-5 job to one as an independent consultant building intranet infrastructure for pharmaceutical companies. And one warm summer day in 2004 he pulled his Mercedes up to a light in the western suburbs and began chatting with a cute girl in a Jaguar next to him.

The light turned green. She drove away. He never saw her again.

It's the usual boy meets girl, boy likes girl, girl drives away and he never even gets her number story.

"It was a great little talk," Philips says. "And the light turned green, and I never saw her again. I didn't want to follow her and do any kind of stalker thing."

Instead of chalking up the experience to a missed opportunity and moving on, Philips decided to do something about it. He merged two of the biggest automotive fads of recent years: flirting (always a fan favorite) and those oval stickers from European license plates, adapted as U.S. tourist secret code: OBX (Outer Banks, N.C.), LBI (Long Beach Island), WW (yes, even Wildwood).

"It took me about a week to put the two together," he says. "I thought, 'What if I put a number on a sticker and put it on cars?'"

Philips bounced the idea off a few friends and a few strangers in bars. He says eight or nine out of 10 people gave him positive feedback on the idea. And after debt from a divorce forced him to file for bankruptcy last September, he figured there was no better time to launch his business. He developed FlirtingInTraffic.com. The premise is simple. A user signs up and gets a sticker in the mail. The person puts the sticker on their car's bumper, and waits for the emails to roll in from interested potential dates encountered in traffic.

Source: [\[Philadelphia Weekly Online\]](#)

Scrapblogging

Scrapblog is a Flash application that allows you to create digital scrapbooks. The intuitive drag and drop functionality allows you to add pictures, text, video and audio onto a background (which is also editable), and once it's finished, you can print it, burn in onto a DVD, or export it as a photoset to Flickr.



You can choose to make your scrapblog public or private, and share it via email and/or RSS feed. You can also rate and post comments to other people's scrapblogs and easily embed them onto your own blog. And last but not least, you can participate in the scrapblog competition and win a digital camera.

Not convinced yet? Just take a look at the scrapblog tour on the [site](#).

Source: [\[Popgadget\]](#)



e- Real Estates

Steve Weber always wanted to be part of something big, but he repeatedly saw opportunities, like the fax and PC markets, pass him by. "I told myself, 'I'm going to get on the front end of one of these market waves,'" says Weber, 42. "When the internet came, I knew that was it. I didn't want to miss out on the biggest opportunity in the history of business."

A year after launching, Z57 narrowed its marketing services to the real estate industry. That same year, the company had its first \$50,000 month; sales have increased every quarter since. Even during the dotcom crash, Z57, which remained privately funded and owned, managed to thrive. Today, Z57 has four offices, 225 employees and 2006 projected sales of \$18 million. The company offers website design, e-mail marketing and personal coaching to real estate agents nationwide.

Source: [Entrepreneur.com]

Tennis, Anybody?



Mesh Tennis is a new social networking site just for tennis players, connecting the tennis community online.

The website lets tennis players find other players of their own skill level, in their own area. It also lets players record scores and matches, review tennis gear, schedule events and read the latest tennis news. Becoming a member is free.

Groups can be formed for club teams, school teams or doubles. Another smart feature is a Google Maps mash-up, which lets members add court locations, using different coloured markers for hard, clay and grass courts. Very useful for travelling players who'd like to find somewhere to play.

Source: [Springwise]

Yearbook Dot Com

John Shin refuses to buy a copy of his high school yearbook. Instead, he's turning to the internet to preserve and share memories of his sophomore year. The 15-year-old has posted a collection of school-related photos and videos, as do many of his classmates. They're able to exchange virtual notes, vote for the most likely to succeed and take part in other yearbook traditions. The Tuckahoe High School student is trying to persuade as many as his friends as possible to sign up at MyYearbook.com -- and save some money, too.

"I'm going to bring everyone who matters to me to MyYearbook," said John, who attends school in Eastchester, a suburb just north of New York City. "I'm confident in that, and besides, they're like \$70."

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But skeptics wonder if the free website can ever truly replace the traditional printed chronicle of high-school memories -- even for the generation that's grown up with the internet.

"Students continue to say they prefer print yearbooks for obvious reasons," said Rich Stoebe, director of communications for Jostens, which sells yearbooks, class rings and other scholastic memorabilia.

After all, will anyone want to haul a laptop to the 25th class reunion? And what happens if the technology changes or something happens to the dot-com?

Jostens and other yearbook companies have responded to changes in technology by offering a supplemental DVD offering student-compiled music, photos and video.

Source: [Wired]

Sexy Online Dating



Springwise: One to watch is Naughty America, launching this summer.

It's an adult (18+) massively multiplayer online dating game, where players can create their own avatars and explore a 'sexy' world, or turn on their webcams for some real world 'action'. Real-world meet-ups can be arranged for as well.

Given the huge success for anything that involves social software, sex, and meeting up, Naughty America may well be the success its founders are expecting. And although they're inviting players from across the globe, there's a vibrant opportunity to set up Naughty Belgium, Naughty Singapore, Naughty Dubai, etc.

Source: [Springwise]

MySpace for Cars



We have social networks for just about everything these days. If there's one for dogs and cats, why not for cars?

Berkeley, California based Boomba is just that - a new web startup focused on car fanatics (and better yet, it isn't ridiculous). The founders, Ethan Lance and Dave Snider, previously worked together at CNET before starting this company.

Users enter information on cars they own, or want to own. Other users can tag and comment the vehicle, and contact the owner and/or add him or her as a friend. The site is extremely well designed and uses Ajax effectively throughout. The fact that just the two founders built the site in a few months is impressive.

Source: [TechCrunch]

Winning Together

Today's apartment complexes, gyms, credit card companies, vacation destinations, airlines, retailers, tax consultants and a wide variety of other businesses extend lucrative offers to encourage customers to refer friends to their business. A new Internet site, MutualWin, www.mutualwin.net, connects consumers so that they can take advantage of a wide range of referral offers, fulfilling the site's slogan, "It's a Mutual Win!"

California entrepreneur K. Michael Bernstein, a seasoned Silicon Valley executive with a Masters in Logistics Management, developed the site. "This revolutionary Web-based listing service signals the arrival of a new type of

free opportunity portal on the Internet," Bernstein explains. "Like-minded consumers nationwide can use the site to cash in on offers extended by all kinds of businesses," he adds.

Source: [MutualWin]

Playing with Eccky

Appealing to the IM-generation, Eccky (created by Media Republic) is a multi-player concept that allows two people to create a virtual baby, add it to their MSN buddy list, and guide it through its childhood and teens.

The look and characteristics of the child are based on the unique 'DNA' of its parents, which is derived from a quiz the couple takes before conception. The parents then have 6 days (each real world day is equal to 3 Eccky years) to raise their Eccky into a happy, well-functioning 18 year old. Which is where instant messaging comes in: as with real children, communication is the key. Parents chat with their Eccky via MSN Messenger like they would with anyone else. Because Eccky is – in essence – a very fancy chatbot, it can engage in a conversation, responding with over 45,000 different answers about 3,500 recognized topics.



Source: [Springwise]

Digg It

Just about a year ago, we wrote about the Internet trend of tagging. Since then, the practice has really taken off with everyone from bloggers to dating sites such as www.consumating.com using tags to make searching and identification easier for users. The latest web trend that tech insiders are buzzing about is digging. The name comes from www.digg.com, a site composed of links to technology news articles. What makes this site unique, however, is that its readers are also the editors. Users submit articles for review and also decide which articles go on the homepage by marking them "digg it", which is essentially giving it the thumbs up. The articles with the most "diggs" go to the top of the page. While Digg.com has the copyright on the term "digg", other forward-thinking sites such as video sharing site Vimeo are also implementing the "dig" feature.

Digging could become a popular alternative to starred or numbered rating systems. Not only is it simple, positive and lacking ambiguity, but it also gives control to the users.

Source: [TrendCentral]

Virtual Riches

Jennifer Grinnell, Michigan furniture delivery dispatcher turned fashion designer in cyber space, never imagined that she could make a living in a video game.

Grinnell's shop, Mischief, is in Second Life, a virtual world whose users are responsible for creating all content. Grinnell's digital clothing and "skins" allow users to change the appearance of their avatars -- their online representations -- beyond their wildest Barbie dress-up dreams. Within a month, Grinnell was making more in Second Life than in her real-world job as a dispatcher. And after three months she realized she could quit her day job altogether. Now Second Life is her primary source of income, and Grinnell, whose avatar answers to the name Janie Marlowe, claims she earns more than four times her previous salary.

Grinnell isn't alone. Artists and designers, landowners and currency speculators, are turning the virtual environment of Second Life into a real-world profit center.

Source: [Wired]

Xfire

CNN Money: "If you make the product cool and people love it, it will spread like crazy and you can monetize it later." Talk like that is often ridiculed, especially by those shaken when the dotcom bubble burst. But if a company really understands its customers, it's hard to beat such a formula. Google (Research) comes to mind, or Hotmail, or Amazon (Research). Or Xfire. The speaker in this instance was that company's CEO, Mike Cassidy.

If you're a male online gamer aged 18-34, chances are you've already heard of Xfire. Otherwise, you probably haven't. But this tiny San Francisco company could be the next MySpace, or more relevantly, IGN, the online gaming site bought by News Corp. (Research) last year for \$650 million.

Xfire's main purpose is to make it easy to play games online with your friends. "We're a combination of a social networking and community site with a media and ad buying site, all designed around gaming," says Cassidy. One of its great virtues as a business is that it has little value for someone unless their friends also use it. The average user convinces five friends to join the first month. That's what we call a viral business model. It's free. As Cassidy says, the whole thing is "monetized" with advertising.

Source: [CNN Money]



Orbee-TUFF



The minty-fresh smell of Planet Dog's Orbee-TUFF balls may just send anyone (even the dog) into the holiday season. I think it's more the shape than the smell that is special about these toys. My favorite kinds of Christmas lights are the really big, fat bulbs. They are reminders of lights my grandma and gram used to hang outside during the holidays.

Now dog owners can bring that nostalgic look to their pup's toy bin.

The Obree-TUFF Bulb with a Treat Spot is a minty- flavored holiday toy for any type of dog who enjoys play.

The bulbs are made from the Orbee-Tuff award-winning material that is doggie-durable, buoyant and bouncy. The bulbs come all sizes for all dogs and in festive red, green and even glow-in-the-dark. They come complete with a silver threaded base. Hollow in the middle, the Treat Spot can be stuffed with favorite treats to keep your dog busy during your holiday fest.

These plush squeakers are embroidered with the words "naughty" and "nice" on each with silver thread. Who needs to wrap these. The two plush toys come packed with holiday glee with decorative "tinsel" in a clear reusable satchel with drawstring closure.

Also, remember during this holiday season that Planet Dog is committed to canine philanthropy. Planet Dog is proud to help spread cheer and goodwill to dogs that serve and support their best friends. A portion of every Planet Dog purchase goes directly to the Planet Dog Foundation, Planet Dog's non-profit, to support canine service programs.

Source: [Williamsport Sun-Gadget]

Dog Scooter

This new concept in near zero emission transportation could be just what you're looking for, though we suspect that parking might be a problem. Seriously though folks, if you have a big dog that often takes you for a walk, here's a great way to harness all that energy and travel the bike paths of your city at the same time. The manufacturer and inventor Mark Schuette of Oregon claims the human is in total control of the speed and direction of the **dog powered scooter**



because the dog is harnessed inside of the frame and subject to its steering (with 90 degree turns easy) and braking force.

Source: [Gizmag]

Cool Vest



Just in time for the hot dogs of summer — the Cool Vest.

Originally marketed in Japan, the Cool Vest is now being sold in the United States to keep dogs cool in hot weather. Owners soak the vest in water and it remains wet, allowing the pet to stay cool as the water evaporates and takes away the heat. A laminated liner keeps the dog from getting wet and the special fabric dries slowly, taking up to two hours. It can be re-moistened. The Cool Vest comes in five sizes, two colors.

Source: [Dayton Daily News]

Retail

What's the Deal?



Personalized comparison shopping site, [DealMine.com](http://www.dealmine.com) announces the launch of its wireless application for consumers to access their membership deals on the road. With thousands of discounts, miles, points and cash back rewards from credit cards, frequent flier programs and associations, DealMine.com guides shoppers how to take advantage of the programs where they belong as well as learn about new programs.

Free membership with DealMine.com enables travelers and shoppers alike to bookmark their favorite deals and save their membership numbers – all in one place. Now when checking in at the rental car or hotel desk, or checking out at their favorite store, consumers can access DealMine.com (<http://www.dealmine.com> or <http://m.dealmine.com>) on any WAP-enabled wireless phone to compare deals and put them to work.

“We are all members of countless programs designed to save us money; the hard part is keeping track of which deal is best. By making our discounts and rewards search wireless, we hope to make choosing the right deal much easier and more accessible.” said Scott Cherkin, CEO and Founder of DealMine.com. The site currently features over 100 car rental deals, 800 hotel deals, 12 JCPenney.com deals, 11 Target.com deals and much more from programs including American Express, AAA, AARP, Veterans Advantage, Visa, Delta SkyMiles, American Airlines AAdvantage, Upromise and more.

On the web, DealMine.com is the only place consumers will find a one-stop shopping website that showcases how membership-based deals compare with general sales and discounts available to all consumers.

Source: [[DealMine.com](http://www.dealmine.com)]

Scent Branding

The nostrils of consumers are to be assailed with a wave of artificial odours designed to lull them into parting with their money.

The smells, pumped into shops and the foyers of hotels, range from melon, which psychologists have found induces feelings of friendliness, to figs, said to be welcoming, and the invigorating whiff of lemons.

“Scent branding” is widespread in America and is now arriving in Britain.

Customers in Mothercare, the baby and toddlers’ shop, can smell its distinctive “soft” odour. The Sheraton chain, meanwhile, has begun to perfume the lobbies of all its British hotels with a chemical smelling like fresh fruit.

Source: [[Times Online](http://www.timesonline.co.uk)]

Unmanned Store



Calling Get & Go Express an “unmanned c-store” might be a bit misleading. It not only doesn't have a staff, but the goods are all stocked in machines facing outward. What's more, it doesn't have tobacco, alcohol, gas or lotto tickets — c-store staples. And its profit margins are even more distinct from its traditional cousin.

Founder Jeff Parsons is building the chain on a simple idea. He realized removing the employees would widen margins to the point that it was feasible, even without the traditional high-margin items that require employees to verify age. And he's augmenting his efforts with kiosk technology: deploying DVD rental kiosks and ATMs in the mix.

Source: [KioskMarketplace]

Smart Shopping Cart

It looks almost like any other shopping cart, except sensors let it follow the shopper around the supermarket and slow down when needed so items can be placed in it. And it never crashes into anyone's heels.

"The immediate thing that jumped to my mind was all those times as a kid when my sister would accidentally hit me with a cart," said its inventor, Gregory Garcia. "It seems like the public would really want this, since everybody shops."

His cart, also known as B.O.S.S. for Battery Operated Smart Servant, was one of about 30 robots displayed last week by University of Florida students.

Source: [CNN]



Intelligent Fitting Room

Researchers from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)'s Institute of Textiles and Clothing have recently developed "An intelligent Simulator for Cross-selling & Up-selling using Smart Fitting Room & Smart Dressing Mirror". It is envisaged to help fashion retailers boost business volume by improving sales and customer services.

This system uses the technology of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) to detect items brought into a fitting room or placed in front of a dressing mirror. When an item is picked into the fitting room or placed in front of a dressing mirror, the product ID will be immediately detected and transmitted to the system through the antennae and reader.

The mix-and-match database of the system will then deliver recommendations to the customer through a touch-screen LCD monitor or projected screen. In the fitting room, if the customer is interested to pick the recommended mix-and-match items, he/she can make their choice by clicking the items shown on screen. The salesman in the shop counter will thus be informed, through the intercom system, of the additional items required by the customer inside the fitting room.



Source: [SFLORG.com]

Umbrella Vending Machine



Remember Norwegian 'Paraplyelskapet AS', who came up with the world's first fully connected umbrella vending machines? Well, Springwise guess they hit a bit of a rainy spot (maybe it was their name?), as the company is basically inactive these days. So bad idea, end of story? Not really: UK-based Umbrolly has resurrected the concept, and is busy installing machines all over London. There are currently 10 of them dotted around London, with a further 10 out at the end of this month. Machines sell approximately 50 umbrellas per machine per rainfall day. They also signed a deal to place the machines exclusively across the London Underground and will have 150 units on the network by the end of 2005. International expansion is also in the works: the company is in talks with location providers in Germany, Holland and the US.

Source: [Springwise]

Newlyweds Bargain

When wedding guests don't put out, savvy newlyweds cash in. Retailers are toasting just-marrieds with completion sales – post-honeymoon promotions that let start-up spouses score discounts on un-purchased registry items. Staples like Bloomingdale's, Williams-Sonoma, Crate & Barrel and Pottery Barn have all integrated completion programs or events into their pre-wedding registry services. Most post-wedding offers give newlyweds a 10% to 20% discount on unfulfilled registry items for three to six months after the ceremony.



Registries help new couples pick up the picket-fence essentials – and get a head start on their new family homes. If guests don't buy it, chances are they still need (or want) it. When it comes to registering for silver tuna items, it doesn't hurt to ask. And if friends and family don't bite on the big ones, enterprising newlyweds can always get a deal.

Source: [\[Iconoculture\]](#)

Robots

Robomop

Housework: bane of everybody's lives. Fact. I mean, no one actually enjoys dusting and polishing do they? So this gadget is sure to bring much happiness: RoboMop is a battery powered 8.5 centimetre dusting machine, replete with electro static pad no less. It's a strange contraption that looks as if the design team were visited by alien spacecraft shortly before receiving their brief, and were thus inspired to create what looks like a flying saucer crossed between a hovercraft: that cleans. Any hard surface, apparently. And with 98% accuracy too. And if you're not sold already?



Source: [\[Shiny Shiny\]](#)

Robot Tutors

Lying in his hospital room, on a mattress designed to protect his fragile skin, 13-year-old Achim Nurse poked his bandaged fingers at an orange button on what looked like a souped-up video game console. Half a second later, in a social studies class discussing the Erie Canal, a 5-foot-tall steel-blue robot raised its hand.

"You have a question, Achim?" said the teacher.

Achim is using a pair of robots — one, called "Mr. Spike," at his bedside, and its mate, "Mrs. Candy," in the classroom — to keep up with his schoolwork and his friends for the months he will be bedridden at Blythedale Children's Hospital in Valhalla, just north of New York City.

The robot in the classroom, which displays a live picture of Achim, provides what its inventors call "telepresence": It gives the boy an actual presence in the classroom, recognized by teachers and

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classmates. It can move from class to class on its four-wheel base and even stop at the lockers for a between-periods chat.

"The robot literally is embraced by students in the classroom as though that is the medically fragile student," said Andrew Summa, national director of the robot project, which is in use at six other hospitals around the country. Achim's teacher, Bob Langerfield, said his other students had become used to the robot — and were treating it as if it were Achim — after just a few days.

Source: [AP via Yahoo!]

Services

Your Own Photostamps

Vanity postage. This pretty-easy-to-use website will generate official US postage stamps featuring a photo or illustration of your choosing (works well with iPhoto for instance). When the service was first introduced two years ago it was abused by clever pranksters -- my favorite hack was a Unabomber postage stamp. The Post Office shut the program down. The service is available again but I don't know what the actual image limits are (vs. their stated policy). We made some silly faces and they made stamps from them. I've seen them used for wedding/party invitations. You can also put business logos on them, or other non-political messages. The cost is more than twice that of regular stamps (less if you buy them in bulk). A 20-stamp sheet of these makes a nice personal, utilitarian gift.



Source: [Cool Tools]

Babyplanners Services



As Babyplanners state on their website: "your dedicated babyplanner takes care of all aspects of life concerned with the upcoming arrival: we help you decide what you need and when you need it." Think sourcing the best baby carrier, create the baby's bedroom, or pre-selecting and arranging birth prep or parent confidence classes.

Babyplanners offer two programs: the 'Good' plan, which contains all the details of the service new parents will want and need, where to secure them, and a timeline of when they need them, and the 'Great' plan, which filters products and services based on individual needs, and which then goes on to organize them.

With the number of time-starved, well-earning new parents only increasing, this is a great opportunity for any service-minded entrepreneur who's been through pregnancy, cashing in on hard-earned skills and diaper-stained experience. Tokyo, Paris, New York and Singapore to follow?

Source: [Springwise]

Airport Weddings



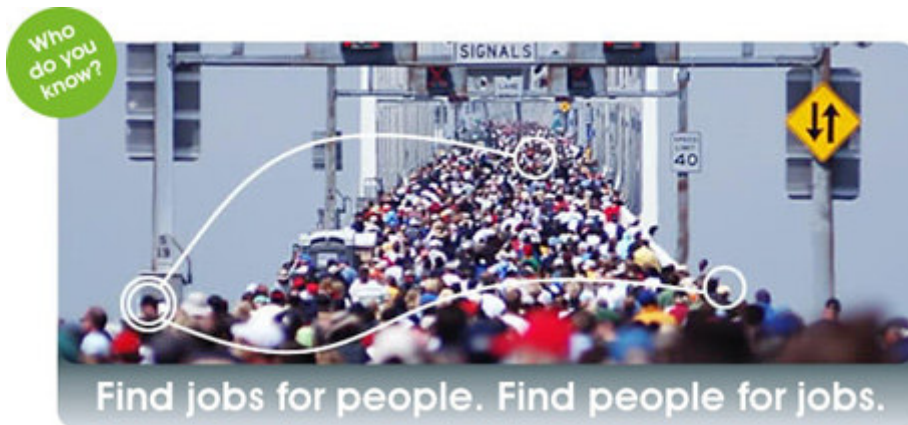
New at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol: weddings to go. Whether a couple met on a flight to Bangkok or just wants to be able to go straight from ceremony to runway for their honeymoon, Schiphol offers travellers the opportunity to get married at the airport.

Brides and grooms to be can pick from several packages, from the all-out 'Ticket to Paradise': get hitched and leave for a tropical destination together with your wedding guests; to 'Say Yes & Go', the budget alternative for couples who want a quick and simple ceremony before flying off together.

As a travel hub, Schiphol gets the TRANSUMER trend that trendwatching.com wrote about earlier this week. Increasing numbers of consumers are mirroring travel behavior in daily life, valuing transient experiences over fixed possessions.

Source: [Springwise]

Referral Economy



Zubka, which launched recently, is hoping to shake up the British and European recruiting markets by creating a platform for hirers to tap into the social networks of active referrers. A referrer's reward depends on the starting salary of the person referred, but is normally between 6 and 8 per cent, according to Zubka. Successfully placing someone in a job with a basic salary of GBP 60,000 would therefore reap the referrer a tidy sum of around GBP 4,000. Joining Zubka is free for both referrers and hirers. Organisations with vacancies to fill can advertise jobs for referrers to browse through for as little as GBP 10 for a four week posting.

Recruiters are always looking for new channels that will help them find the right person for a job, so rewarding people for rooting through their valuable networks makes complete sense. More local versions to follow?

Source: [Springwise]

No Fear Flight

Place your bags in an overhead bin, fasten your seat belts and hand your kids over. Gulf Air's Sky Nanny program is a complimentary service that gives parents and kids a more enjoyable in-flight experience.

Trained nannies help on the ground with boarding and seat assignment; in the air with babysitting, meal service, games, activities and landing procedures.

Every aspect of Sky Nanny promises parents and kids a comfortable, hassle-free experience. So all parents have to do is sit back, relax and enjoy the flight.

Giving coach passengers – tall or short – first-class service that meets needs for comfort, convenience and experience could potentially inspire a long-term customer loyalty program.

Source: [Iconoculture]

Delivering Baggage

This week, thousands of kids will be returning home from summer camp -- without suitcases, duffel bags, tennis rackets, or even their dirty clothes.

Much of the baggage will be delivered back to their homes by small firms that have made a business of transporting campers' bags to and from the camps.

Typical is Camp Trucking, based in Denver. Employing an army of college students on summer break, the firm picks up baggage at the homes of campers and delivers it to camp just before a session begins. It charges a flat rate, with no restrictions on size or for bulky athletic equipment and duffel bags that sometimes weigh more than 100 pounds. At the end of the session, bags are returned -- with some parents even arranging drop-offs at laundries and dry cleaners along the way.

"We really are service companies that happen to be trucking companies," says Camp Trucking's 39-year-old owner, Stuart Seller.

The service is useful to the camps, too. They receive bags for a session all at once, a few days before the kids arrive, allowing the camp staff to focus on getting kids settled in, rather than keeping track of arriving luggage. The services often deliver the bags directly to a bunkhouse and the bunk assigned each camper.

Source: [StartupJournal]

Mobile Office



A novel twist added by Habitaz is the pre-paid office card. While most of Habitaz' lease plans are per month, their pre-paid GreenCard allows customers to rent space and facilities by the hour, minute or megabyte. A card costs ZAR 1,000 (USD 145 / EUR 115), and gives holders access to all of the facilities at Habitaz, each of which are charged by use. Facilities include open plan workspace that's open 24/7, with free parking and 'bottomless Ethiopian coffee' (ZAR 22/hour), admin support and secretarial services (ZAR 19.74/15 minutes), phone calls, delivery services, etc.

Habitaz is developing a network of furnished business centres, shared work spaces and meeting rooms in South Africa and all major business hubs in the rest of Africa. Perfect solution for travelling business people, virtual offices, and start-ups -- a group that's growing explosively in South Africa.

Source: [Springwise]

Webcast My Wedding

Springwise loves forward-looking ventures that manage to stick around until their time has truly come. Like webcastmywedding.net, which broadcasts weddings to a couple's friends and family unable to come over from (or to) far flung places. Customers need a video camera, laptop, and high speed online access. The company then charges USD 395 for setting up a live stream of the event, support for up to 25 simultaneous viewers (who are sent a url and password), and an on-demand archive of the wedding for 10 days. More streams and an annual archive account can be had for an extra fee.

\$395 Live!
**Broadcast your wedding live
over the internet!**
*On-demand archive account
included for 10 days!*

Business is thriving, thanks to a powerful mix of tech and social developments: everyone is online; the infrastructure is in place (the web is finally about broadband and video: thank you, youtube!); more and more couples choose to get married in exotic locations far from most of their friends and family; globe-spanning immigration means family members literally live everywhere; while jet setting couples have friends in every major city in the world. Not to mention Generation MySpace, who, when they eventually choose to get married, will have virtual friends in every country with an online connection.

Source: [Springwise]

Travel Entertainment



Launched yesterday at Schiphol Airport, Fuel for Travel lets consumers download travel guides, music, audio books, tv shows and movies to their MP3 players and other digital devices.

The Fuel for Travel features listening and viewing stations for travellers to browse digital content. Once they've found what they want, they can dock their device, pay by credit or debit card, and download the material. Pricing is similar to that of online music and video downloads.

Members of test groups were especially interested in destination travel guides. Schiphol, which is managing the project, hopes that offering digital content will add to a more enjoyable travel experience for passengers.

Letting customers create their own in-flight entertainment package makes perfect sense for travel hubs. One to partner with and set up at an airport or train station near you? Just try and get Apple on board.

Source: [Springwise]

Energy Vending Machine



In a world that is obsessed with mobile phones, PDAs, iPods and the like, we are perpetually draining and recharging our batteries. In-home refuelling is a cinch, but the same cannot be said for public places where electrical outlets are typically guarded against unauthorized recharging. The **ChargeBox** offers a solution, which consists of 6 small lockers, each with 4 unique chargers that can power 90% of our mobile devices. Users simply plug in to the charger that corresponds to their device, make payment with a coin or via SMS, lock their box and return when charging is complete. The ChargeBox will top up your battery for 40 minutes at a cost of £1.

Source: [The Cool Hunter]

The Window Cleaner

When Terry Mullins was searching for someone to clean his windows, he discovered that the traditional domestic window cleaner has all but disappeared. So, after two years of research and planning he has launched The Local Window Cleaner Ltd.

"The market has always been there," explains Terry. "What was required was someone to devise a system that could deliver the service reliably and profitably, and that's just what we've done." The Local Window Cleaner customers are 'recruited' rather than sold, using a system that is more of a signing-up process than a form of marketing. Window cleaning is what we do, but it's not what we sell," says Terry. We sell reliability and peace of mind and our customers are very happy to pay our prices for it."

The Local Window Cleaner is committed to supporting franchisees with comprehensive management and staff training. Franchisees are empowered to grow their business to a size that matches their own personal ambitions.

[The Franchise Magazine]

Golf Glamour


Proving that every industry can benefit from innovation, Eye Candy Caddies' mission is to make golf sexy. Similar to Models At Work, the temp agency that we wrote about last year, Eye Candy only works with models and other very pretty people.

Caddies can be hired for GBP 150 and travel expenses, which covers 18 holes and an after-links drink at the club house. Not just eye candy, every caddy completes a special training program to learn the finer points of golf etiquette, including essential rules such as "Never laugh at a bad shot", and "Encourage and applaud where necessary."

Appealing to a desire for glamour, prestige and a bit of fun, the service is a hit with corporate golf events. Considering the continued popularity of golf around the world, and the sport's strong ties with business, whether for wooing clients or informally closing deals, glamour caddy services should take off in many markets.

Source: [Springwise]

Bid Your Loans

Featured Loan Listings				View all listings
Title / Borrower / Group name	Amount @ Lender rate / Credit grade / Debt to income	Funded / Bids	Time left / Created	
 Paying OFF credit card debt	\$15,000.00 @ 18% Credit grade: D Debt to income: 8%	\$2,876.00 27 bids	2d 12h 56m Mar-21, 3:52 PM	
karmaguy Business Loans for Entrepreneurs!				

"Prosper gives people the opportunity to take back the marketplace for consumer credit. By providing the platform and tools for an efficient marketplace created by and for people, Prosper aims to make consumer lending more financially and socially rewarding for everyone."

How it works? People who need money request it, with a listing of why they need the money, and some numbers describing their credit rating. Other people then bid for the privilege of lending money to them. The lower the interest rate offered by the lender, the more likely he is to win the bid. Prosper facilitates, in return for a one-time 1% fee on funded loans from borrowers, and a 0.5% annual loan servicing fee from lenders.

Source: [Springwise]

Pets Hotels


Ask any canine or kitty: It's doggone traumatic when owners go away. But Mazzu's Dog and Cat Hotel in Philadelphia aims to ease things with tony boarding options that include dinners of filet mignon or fresh salmon. A standard "personal suite" gives furry family members a TV, toys, unlimited spring water, daily maid service and "unlimited personal affection," with add-ons like a fresh salmon dinner (\$22) or filet mignon (\$22). Going for highbrow clients, Mazzu's rejects any and all "fleabag" hotel jokes, requiring pets to be on active external parasite meds before check-in.



Pet owners who blow out of town and leave the critters behind have some serious guilt to assuage – and a compelling desire to keep their loved ones comforted while they're gone. Pets-as-people consciousness says animals get stressed upon a change of scenery and the departure of their clan.


Source: [Iconoculture]

Sell What You Say



What do you say?
Rate: \$ _____

1-888-MY-ETHER
ext. **YOU**



Computer Help?
Rate: \$50 per hour?

The concept of Ether is straightforward, but it has a massive back end infrastructure (thankfully Ingenio already had it built). They call it an “ebay for services”, allowing people to charge for advice over the phone (and by email - more on that below).

Service providers set up an account by providing some personal information and a phone number that they would like to be called at. Any service that can be provided over the phone is a perfect match for Ether. “Sellers” set their price, from free to anything (on a per minute or per hour basis). They can tell Ether the hours they are willing to take calls. Every seller is issued a toll free phone number (with a dedicated extension), which forwards to their phone.

Buyers can search through providers, see prices, feedback, etc. Once they agree to terms, they can place the call. Sellers only get calls once a Buyer has paid the fee and agreed to the terms. Ether takes a flat 15% of fees for its trouble. They cover long distance charges and credit card processing fees out of this 15%.

And the fun doesn't stop there. Sellers can also sell any type of digital content through Ether as well. The buyer is able to access the content only after paying the agreed upon fee. This content can be emailed out to people, or accessed via a link/badge that can be placed on a website.

Source: [TechCrunch]

Night Delivery

Kozmo! Urbanfetch! Food.com! Ordering a pint of Ben & Jerry's and a video from your East Village studio in your underwear. Ah, those were the days! But as predicted, beautiful flowers now grow on the graves of many a failed dotcom. In Istanbul, After 9 started delivering stuff to demanding Istanbulites in need of urban necessities like condoms, beverages, cigarettes, diapers and sandwiches. Orders are placed online or over the phone, and are delivered by motorbike or car in 45 minutes or less. Opening hours are 9pm–6am. For this urban luxury, customers pay a 25-30% premium compared to regular supermarket prices. The minimum order size is USD 7 (EUR 6/GBP 4), but the average order is closer to USD 20 (EUR 17/GBP 11.50).



Source: [Springwise]

Room for Writers



Paragraph ("providing an affordable and tranquil working environment for writers of all genres") occupies a 2,500 square foot loft space near Union Square, divided into a writing room and a lounge area. The writing room has 38 partitioned desks, while the lounge area contains a kitchenette, a large round table and smaller café tables. There's a refrigerator and cabinets to store members' food and beverages, as well as a microwave, toaster oven and coffee maker. The

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space has a laser printer and wifi throughout, and is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Members are assigned a pin code to access the space, and don't need to be published authors: a strong drive to write is enough. Monthly access fees range from USD 80 to 132 (EUR 67-110/GBP 45-75). So far, Paragraph has signed up 120 members.

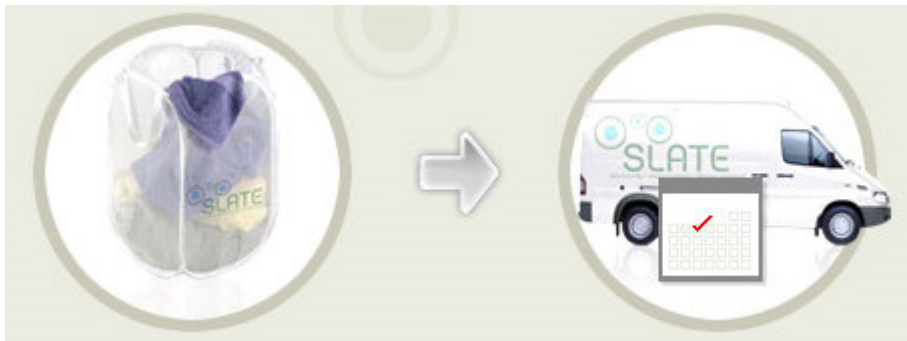
Source: [Springwise]

More than Banking

Banks of the Future create a stylish and user-friendly atmosphere. Target group are people of any income level who want to associate their finances with fun rather than with a strict official approach. Free seminars and events make it easy for first-timers to start dealing with their finances and get involved with the money market. The banks of the Future make banking simple, easy and offer a variety of services which allow the customer to deal with his money independently and flexibly. And it is about more than just money: Banks of the Future present themselves as meeting-places; open spaces for art, culture and discussion.

Source: [TrendBlog]

More than Laundry



Slate is an all-inclusive laundry service for NYC residents available through the web. Customers sign up for a weekly flat fee of USD 50-60 (GBP 29-35/EUR 42-50), receive a Slate hamper, then choose a pick-up time. Which means no standing in line, no counting and itemizing, no financial surprises: Slate does the sorting, and determines which garment needs to be cleaned by which process (anything from hydro-carbon, wet-cleaning, hand washing, to regular laundering).

Cleaned clothes come back wrapped, tagged, and good as new. The environment also gets a gentler treatment, as the company uses a combination of bio-degradable and organic agents. In Slate's own words: "You are dealing with someone who speaks your language. You bought USD 250 dollar jeans and you are taking them to be cleaned where? To the run-of-the mill cleaner in his dreary shop down the block, who doesn't care as much for the clothes as you do? We speak the same language: fashion. When your clothes come back, they as new as the day you bought them at Barneys. On the surface we are a clothes cleaner, but underneath we are a fashion label."

Source: [Springwise]

Mobile Barbers

Do you find your weekends being eaten up by errands? Thanks to an ingenious local entrepreneur, you can now eliminate a trip to the hair stylist from your To Do list. Dena Kaufer, a 20-year veteran of the hair biz, has retrofitted three Winnebagos into full-feature salons on wheels. Her team of stylists drive their mobile barber shops onto the campuses of Silicon Valley's biggest tech firms so employees can get a quick snip-and-trim without leaving the company office park. Some of OnSite's stops are open to the public, while some stops are designed for campus employees only.

Source: [The Wave Magazine]



Sports & Games

Smart Soles



A Californian company called Outland Research hopes to put high-tech intelligence into sports shoes. This is because feet often need different kinds of support, depending on whether they are walking, running or playing sport. Conventional shoes that are ideal for some activities are unsuited to others.

Inventor and company founder Louis Rosenberg hopes to change all this with reconfigurable footwear. The soles of his new shoes have several hollow bladders, connected via narrow tubes, and filled with a deformable and electrically-activated liquid – such as an ester or amide of a phosphorous-based acid.

Normally, the liquid flows freely through the tubes, letting the bladders self-adjust as the foot rocks from heel to toe and rolls from side to side. But, when current from a battery or a piezo-electric generator is fed through the tubes, the liquid hardens restricting flow and making the bladders firmer.

Source: [New Scientist]

Ridewire Thrill



Daytona Beach area upstart Slingboard Sports introduces "Ridewire". The Ridewire system is an innovative new ride and training system that is capable of performing the maneuvers and thrills found in surfing, snowboarding, wakeboarding, and other action sports. It is a standalone unit that can be ridden anytime, anywhere on engineered indoor, outdoor and mobile mount systems. Ridewire is generating a buzz due to its unique, innovative design, lack of restriction and if all safety systems are used it can be a safe and thrilling zero-impact activity for both adrenaline junkie and individuals looking for a fun new thrill ride.

Source: [Slingboard Sports]

Bossaball Phenomenon



We have to admit that our adolescent desire for the inflatable "Moon Walk" has never really left us. A friend of ours told us about a sport, Bossaball that seems to be embracing this desire for the birthday party apparatus of yesteryear and combining it with sports. Originating somewhere between the rock of Gibraltar and the Port of Antwerp, **Bossaball** combines many sports – soccer, beach volleyball, capoeira, and gymnastics into one giant pitch that consists of trampolines and inflatable cushions. Bossaball has become somewhat of a "phenomenon" in Spain with players using all parts of their bodies to pass the ball over a net volleyball style. Bossaball also embraces

the crowd with the referees entertaining fans and bands playing live percussion combined with whistles and a DJ.

Source: [Josh Spear]

Game Fitness

One day in the future, we're sure that everyone will be strong, good-looking and above-average. But today, given that 16 percent of American children aged 12-19 are overweight according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there have to be ways to get kids into more healthful habits. As we all know, everyone's supposed to be exercising regularly in order to stay well and fit -- thankfully, kids have a new type of fitness center in Mountain View, California (home of Google!) which aims to appeal to the children of Silicon Valley reared on a steady diet of gadgets. Overtime Fitness, which opens tomorrow (and restricts membership to kids 13-18) includes a regular workout equipment area, a "study center" with PCs, Macs and free WiFi (for the Linux laptop-toting set?), a DDR-clone called "In The Groove 2" and the Cybex Trazer, a virtual reality-type game that maps physical movements to the on-screen action.

Source: [Engadget]

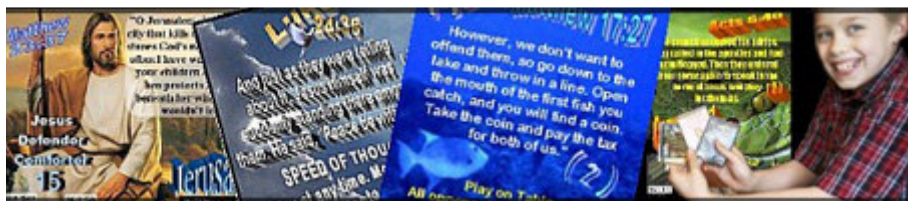
Bodypad Fighting

The **Bodypad fighting simulator** turns Xboxers' and PlayStation playas' bodies into gaming pads. Gamers with get-up-and-go don the goofy apparatus, then flail their way to gaming glory. Bodypad's system of straps wraps around gamers' fists, elbows and knees. Instead of mashing buttons, players then kick, punch and choke at nothing in efforts to defeat their virtual opponents. The 'pad doesn't require special software and works with many existing games, including dance and sports games.



Source: [Iconoculture]

Bible Trading Card Game



Despite widespread acceptance, Harry Potter and Yu-Gi-Oh! trading cards still aren't welcome in some Christian homes. The Bible Trading Card Game offers an alternative, replete with 240 cards bearing biblical figures, locations and verses that kids memorize to score points. The edutainment game tutors kids in the scriptures and faith (play begins with prayer) and encourages Sunday school attendance: That's where rarer cards are distributed. Kids and parents already have taken a liking to the card game: The first printing sold out, and a tournament is under way. Like secular parents, faith-filled parents aim to protect their offspring from corrupting forces. Keeping kids at play in accordance with faith principles can prevent tykes from coming under the spell of bad influences.

Source: [Iconoculture]

TableFlip



Entrepreneur: Beasley is the creator of table golf, a new game that combines golf and billiards into one. Beasley dreamed up the game in 1999 while serving a sentence. As he watched a golf tournament get rained out on TV, he wondered what golfers did on rainy days. Armed with his idea and some crude blueprints he had drawn, Beasley left prison three years later, in November 2002.

After inviting a few of the neighborhood kids to test out his new game, Beasley hit the road, showing his creation to local pool halls and sporting goods stores. Beasley's game caught the eye of a representative from The Price Is Right, as well as his current manufacturer, Eagle Industries Ltd. Beasley expects 2006 sales of more than \$5 million.

Source: [Entrepreneur]

The Assassin

For an attempted assassination, there sure was a lot of giggling going on. "I'm going to feel pretty good about shooting someone, if I don't die first," said would-be assassin Nicole Califano, who was drinking a beer, which was not helping to steady her trigger finger any.

Califano is one of 130 contestants armed with water pistols who are stalking each other this month throughout San Francisco, waiting to ambush and squirt total strangers. It's called Street Wars, and its creator bills it as a "water gun assassination tournament." It was a big hit last year in New York and Vancouver, British Columbia, where many people have even odder ideas about pastimes than they do here.



"Think you've got what it takes to be an assassin?" says the game's Web site. The idea is to squirt your assigned victim before you get squirted by the player who has been assigned to squirt you. Entering the game costs \$35. Whoever gets squirted is out of the game, and the last person left dry gets \$500.

Source: [SFGate.com]

Technology

Hug Shirt



The Hug Shirt is perfect for people in love that are distant from each other, it basically offers the possibility to recreate a hug feeling and not on a virtual kind of way.

The shirt works with Bluetooth + a Hug Me java software + a cellphone and in order for the other person to receive the hug, he/she must be wearing a shirt as well. It was nominated as one of the best inventions of this year by the Times Magazine so that is probably a good thing, or not... Hug shirts don't have any assigned phone number, all the data goes from the sensors Bluetooth to your mobile phone and your mobile phone delivers the hug data to your friend's phone and it is seamlessly transmitted Bluetooth to his or her shirt!

Source: [Uber-Review]

ATMs for Church

Baker came up with the kiosk idea a couple of years ago. He had just kicked off a \$3-million building drive, but noticed that few people seemed to keep cash in their wallet anymore for the collection bag.

So he began studying the electronic payment business. He designed his machine with the help of a computer programmer who attends Stevens Creek, and found ATM companies willing to assemble it for him. In early 2005, he introduced the first machine at his church.

Since then, kiosk giving has gradually gained acceptance among his upper-middle-class flock. The three kiosks are expected to



take in between \$200,000 and \$240,000 this year — about 15% of the church's total donations. "It's truly like an ATM for Jesus," Baker said.

This summer, Baker and his wife, Patty, began selling the devices to other churches through their for-profit company, SecureGive. They are its only employees, but a handful of contractors help them custom-tailor the machines for churches.

The kiosks can let donors identify their gift as a regular tithe or offering, or direct it to building or missionary funds. The machines send information about the donation to a central church computer system, which shoots the donors an e-mail confirmation.

The Bakers charge between \$2,000 and \$5,000 for the kiosks, which come in a variety of configurations. They also collect a monthly subscription fee of up to \$49.95 for licensing and support. And a card-processing company gets 1.9% of each transaction; a small cut of that fee goes to SecureGive.

Source: [LATimes.com]

Touchscreen Menu

Bytes, a new cafe in the UK town of Canterbury (of Chaucer fame), is making a name for itself with its high-tech ordering system.

Aside from helping Bytes save money on wait staff and menu printing, the touchscreens allow the restaurant to build a database of customer preferences, and to change items and prices on the fly. The touchscreens also double as game consoles, keeping the kids occupied.

So far, patron response to the touchscreens is overwhelmingly positive, and the owner is already considering opening a second location. As long as customers respond just as enthusiastically to the food, Bytes appears to have a bright future.

Source: [FutureWire]

Fuel Cell Toys

At last — energy independence for toys. Horizon Fuel Cell Technologies' fuel cell toys are small-scale vehicles powered by the energy source of the future. Its H-racer miniature fuel cell car features an onboard hydrogen fuel cell system. Fill 'er up at the miniature hydrogen refueling station.

Sure it's educational — but more important, it's cool! Toys that offer a taste of tech to come appeal to kids and tech-loving grownups (or their "children within").

With all the press that fuel cell tech has gotten, curiosity over hydrogen-powered engines is high. Toys with the tech offer an affordable way to check it out.

Source: [Iconoculture]

Replay That Smell

Imagine being able to record a smell and play it back later, just as you can with sounds or images.



Engineers at the Tokyo Institute of Technology in Japan are building an odour recorder capable of doing just that. Simply point the gadget at a freshly baked cookie, for example, and it will analyse its odour and reproduce it for you using a host of non-toxic chemicals.

The device could be used to improve online shopping by allowing you to sniff foods or fragrances before you buy, to add an extra dimension to virtual reality environments and even to assist military doctors treating soldiers remotely by recreating bile, blood or urine odours that might help a diagnosis.

Source: [New Scientist]

Read Without Flipping



If you drop by a show house for an apartment in Korea, you will see that you can read a book without turning pages using RFID technology.

If you have a book, desk, and a display equipped with RFID chips, now you can read the whole contents through a large display just by putting the book on the desk ; antenna reads the chip information and delivers them to the display. Of course, you can actually use your hands - if you want - for a touch screen or a remote control. Absolutely royalist isn't it!!

Source: [AVING]

How to Play Cassette Tapes on your PC

Okay, class, in today's history lesson, we'll be learning about primitive forms of technology. You see, before MP3 players or iPods, and even before CDs, back in the '80s and '90s, people listened to music on devices called cassette tapes.

And thanks to the Plusdeck 2, a cassette deck for computers, we can bring it back to life. All we do is slide the internal drive into the CD drive bay, pop in this plastic rectangle known as the

cassette, and we can listen to the tape (that's street for cassette) through our computer. Any questions?

Source: [DailyCandy]

Easy Page Scanning

Atiz Innovation: What if you could digitize any book you want with just the push of a button and without having to go through the tedious process of turning the pages manually?

BookDrive® -- the world's first and only desktop-sized, automatic page-turning scanner featuring a patent-pending technology that eliminates manually copying and scanning documents.



It is just like any traditional flatbed scanners that you are familiar with, but BookDrive is unique in that it has an automatic page-turning mechanism inside. Simply entering the number of pages you want to scan, BookDrive then automatically outputs the entire content of the scanned book in a digital format without requiring constant supervision and interference. Unlike traditional flatbed scanners, BookDrive enables businesses to digitize content with an automatic page-turning mechanism. BookDrive includes an integrated, easy-to-use software function that performs essential tasks such as auto cropping and image clean-up. Outside is a simple interface. Under the hood it embodies advanced software algorithms to automatically detect edge and crop the results so that what you have resembles the actual scanned page.

Source: [Atiz Innovation's BookDrive]

Digital Wine Cellar

These days, more and more people are enjoying the habit of drinking wine because they find this habit healthy. In the future, life will be rich so that common people will enjoy wine. Since how one keeps wine determines the taste and the smell, preserving wine will become more important. Coming from this point of view, we designed a digital wine cellar which keeps wine and also act as a decoration in the house. Function-wise, this machine adjusts temperature according to different kinds of wine, indicates quantity of wine bottles, and controls air circulating up, down and sideways within the wine cellar. Also, interior lighting function is added, so that this conceptual preservation machine can not only keep wine fresh but also act as a decoration.

Source: [Yanko Design]



Aged Wines in Few Seconds

Aging is the name of the game when it comes to fine wine. Top producers mature their brews in oak barrels; connoisseurs will keep a bottle in the cellar for years so they can savor the complex bouquet at its peak.

For Hiroshi Tanaka, all that waiting is just a waste of time -- and he says he's got the machinery to prove it.

2006's Best Business Ideas

"We can now electrolyze young wine and ship bottles of fine wine out in no time at all," declared Tanaka, president of Japanese startup Innovative Design and Technology Inc., which runs a small laboratory in Hamamatsu, west of Tokyo.

"Think of the savings we'll make. Shorter production time, no need for storage, no need to invest in barrels," he said.

The company is in talks with wineries in California and Washington state to start providing its U.S. affiliate, BW2 Holdings, with young wine to treat and sell, Tanaka said. BW2 hopes to sell the bottles on the Internet later this year for an affordable US\$5.

Source: [Mainichi]

Seeing The World

By connecting the real world with information from the Internet, users can explore geographical spaces with the eye of an insider. There is a huge variety of technologies which can be used to enable visitors to find their way around the globe. So far, most applications are used to tour museums, tourist sights or foreign cities. The most obvious applications are audio tour guides, recorded to CD or downloadable to cell phones, iPods and PDA's. New online tools enable users to tag certain locations with special barcodes which let interested visitors retrieve the hidden information with their cellphones.



Source: [CScout]



Tosh Souvenirs



Tosh is about the souvenirs you always wished you could find. In the words of the founders: "We founded tosh in 2004. Having travelled to almost a hundred cities in over 40 countries, we've always found it near impossible to find anything original, stylish or affordable worth buying. (And, we hasten to add, this was not through a lack of trying!)"

Whether it's Prague, Perth or Penang, it seems that in the age of mass tourism, everything has started to look the same. The same "hand made" ornaments (in China that is!) The same tiresome t-shirts. The same faded postcards. Nothing original, nothing quirky.

Enough, we said! It's about time someone created some stylish and affordable mementos of all the places we've been. So we did!"

Source: [tosh]

Mystery Threatre



The latest hot show in New York isn't in the Theatre District, or even in any theatre for that matter. In fact, audiences are more like "participants" as they're on their feet for the duration of the performance. Part theatre, part scavenger hunt, part walking tour, **Accomplice: New York** is giving participants a whole new way to experience the city, even among locals who previously thought tours are just for out-of-towners.

After signing up, participants receive a "mystery" phone call a day or two prior to the show, telling them where to meet. (Think of it as the new version of the popular '80s Murder Mystery Party.) Teams of eight then embark on a crime-solving Lower Manhattan-based adventure, picking up clues along the way from "random" encounters with Accomplice cast members.

Source: [TrendCentral]

Youth Vacations



In addition to jewelry and electronics, recent high school grads have been telling us the most sought after graduation gift isn't actually a material possession, but rather an experience. Pre-paid trips from Contiki were the most desired gifts amongst the recently graduated Class of 2006. Targeting 18-35 year-olds, Contiki is a hip vacation company that gives participants the opportunity to travel the world, while exploring at their own pace. Guides lead travellers to all the best sights but unlike most tightly-scheduled tour programs, travellers are "free" to check things out on their own without a guide breathing down their necks.

Source: [TrendCentral]

Quirky Nights Under French Skies



You can stay in France in anything from a Yurt to an Airstream caravan. Ann Noon offers a guide.

Yurts: Squatting at the top of the Ardèche river gorge, overlooking some of the most rugged scenery in France, the Mille Etoiles encampment is home to 12 individually-designed yurts scattered throughout a peaceful oak forest. Handcrafted from different woods, each tent is furnished with a double or king-sized bed and has a relaxation area complete with hammocks. For honeymooners, three of the yurts are hidden deep in the woods with their own miniature camp kitchen and ecological toilet.

Gipsy caravans: Four fully equipped gipsy caravans with en-suite bathrooms are the main reason to stay on the Saint Cerice estate in the pretty village of Vogüé, also in the Ardèche. The caravans, which each sleep five, are designed for maximum comfort. With cherry trees, olive groves and vineyards all around, the surrounding parkland feels very Mediterranean.

Teepees: In the western Loire stands Le Bonheur de Vivre, a Sioux Indian village with six "authentic" wigwams decked out in skins and pictures of chieftains of yore.

Source: [Telegraph UK]

Funky Campers



In keeping with today's mobile theme, Escape Rentals is a New Zealand camper rental company that sets itself apart by letting artists turn camper vans into art on wheels.

Taking something slightly dull – a camper – and turning it into something fresh, Escape Rentals is attracting travellers who are tired of mass tourism and looking for a more unique experience. Each of their nearly 100 campers is given an aerosol overhaul by a New Zealand artist. Paint jobs draw from the whole spectrum of visual art and pop culture, from kiwiana to Far Side comics and Maurice Sendak to Pablo Picasso. Rental rates are competitive, at around NZD 59 (USD 37/EUR 29) per day, with optional extras like mobile phones and solar showers charged separately.

Source: [Springwise]

Join the Tribe



Launched last week by two young British entrepreneurs, tribewanted is creating a global tribe that will develop a sustainable eco-community on an island in Fiji.

In what seems like a hippie dream crossed with an episode of Survivor, tribewanted is looking for 5000 people from around the world to become part of a tribe that will not only exist online, but will also settle, 100 at a time, on 'Adventure Island'. On the map, Adventure Island is known as Vorovoro, and is being leased to tribewanted by the local tribal chief.

There are three types of membership to choose from: Nomads get 1 years membership and 7 nights on the island for GBP 120 / USD 210; Hunters are members for 2 years and can stay for 14 nights (GBP 240 / USD 420); and Warriors are member for 3 years and can stay for 21 nights (GBP 360 / USD 630). When the 5000th member joins, the tribe will be formed and will start to make tribal decisions by voting through the online community at tribewanted.com, on issues such as the name of the tribe, type of infrastructure that will be required, and how to build an island community in an environmentally friendly way.

Source: [Springwise]

Sightjogging

We are sure this happens to everyone all the time. You find yourself in Rome - just have a couple of hours at your disposal - and are not sure whether to spend them in the gym working out or sightseeing. Well - you don't have to make that choice anymore!

The ever resourceful Romans have come up with a whole new take on sightseeing in Rome, which I am sure will have traditionalists jumping up and down with rage. In short, the latest trend for the fitness-conscious visitors of Rome is a guided tour of Rome whilst jogging. One of the routes claims to take you in 90 minutes and 5 miles down the Spanish Steps, through the city's very heart and across the Tiber River, you get to Castel S. Angelo and the magnificent St.Peter's Basilica.

"An absolutely striking route, not to be missed on your first visit to Rome.", says the Sightjogging website.

Another route takes you in 60 minutes through 2000 years of history round the Imperial Forums and the Colosseum. The trip is handled by multilingual trainers jogging tourists along predefined routes. The clients are met at the hotel or at predefined locations and during the route the trainer gives cultural information about the highlights of the route itself in the language chosen by the clients.

Source: [Italy Magazine]

Travel & Transport

In Need of SkyRest



Modern aviation is nothing to laugh at.

Although crying about it is quite acceptable. Especially when you discover that your \$600 ticket entitles you to an extra pack of peanuts, a seat that doesn't recline, and the stewardess's tortured life story.

Before the situation goes from bad to worse (her teen years were soooo tragic), pull out the SkyRest. The miraculous, wedge-shaped travel pillow makes even the most uncomfortable spots downright pleasant.

Just set it in your lap and snooze. The angle ensures that your head always stays forward. No more back and forth between the tray, the headrest, the window, and your neighbor's shoulder. Or use it as an impromptu table, foot prop, or back support during long layovers. Because it easily inflates and deflates, you'll always be able to give things a rest.

Source: [DailyCandy]

Cabs for Pink Ladies



In London alone, 10 women are attacked each month after getting into an unlicensed mini-cab. No wonder that many women feel safer taking a taxi driven by a woman.

Pink Ladies spotted a business opportunity, and created the UK's first women-only private car hire franchise. The Pink Ladies drive Renault Kangoos that are pink inside and out, making them highly visible. Passengers sign up as members, and fares are either pre-paid, paid by credit card or with a 'pink account', which is both convenient for members and safe for drivers.

Source: [Springwise]

Astronaut Miles

Frequent flyer miles will for the first time be good beyond this planet, based on a new offering from Virgin Atlantic Airways and its space-related sister company Virgin Galactic. Flying Club members will be able to convert their regular miles into space miles. To get to space, members will need to log 2 million miles down here.

"A journey into space seems like a distant dream for many but this deal makes it more even more achievable for our frequent travelers to become astronauts," said Sir Richard Branson, chairman of Virgin Atlantic and Virgin Galactic. "We expect the first Virgin Galactic space flight to take place in 2008 which gives our Flying Club members time to save up all their miles."

Virgin Galactic commercial flights are expected to cost \$200,000 initially but the company expects prices to fall over time. Virgin Galactic will own and operate privately built spaceships, modeled on the history-making SpaceShipOne craft, which won the Ansari X-prize for repeat trips to space by a privately built craft.

Source: [SPACE.com]

Social Networking in the Sky

Airline flights are one of the few situations where you find yourself wedged against a total stranger for hours at a time. It might as well be someone you like. With that in mind, a new Web site, AirTroductions.com, aims to match like-minded fliers for business networking, book discussions, romance -- whatever it is you want from a seatmate.



To get started, you'll need to fill out a short form that includes your bio as well as preferences on topics such as hotels (Holiday Inn or Four Seasons?) and clothes (Prada or Levi's?). Once you have a ticket, enter your flight data to see who is signed up on the site for the same flight. You'll pay \$5 if you contact anyone. Then you'll need to ask the airline to put you in adjoining seats.

Source: [BusinessWeek]

Truck Drivers Agency

A Ballina man who is already one of the most successful businessmen in the West of Ireland is embarking on a new venture to match potential employers with qualified drivers who are available for work.

Tiernan Gill, who established Gills Driving School thirty-five years ago, said, "I have quite a number of truck owners contacting me and asking if I knew of anyone who had recently passed the artic. licence and who was looking for a job."

He added that qualified drivers were very hard got at present and potential employers often had to go through a lengthy process of advertising and interviewing on a number of occasions before they got the right person.

Tiernan Gill says what he intends to do is to interview drivers who are looking for jobs and then to rate them - one to ten - on a number of factors including driving ability and personality. He said the agency, which is the first of its kind in Connacht, presents a lot of advantages for both the employee and the employer. For example, for the employee it opens up a wide range of opportunities for jobs all over Connacht and for the employer it represents time and costs saved in interviewing and advertising.

Source: [Western People]

Parking Space

Reservations and convenience services widen the range of possibilities for those who use pedal power. Why fight the crowd at the bike rack? Clancy Systems International's Bicycle Parking Network allows bikers to use their cellphones to reserve and pay for bike storage. Users locate available lockers online and then use their cells to reserve space and retrieve access codes for drop-off and pickup. Customer accounts are linked to cell numbers, enabling automatic monthly billing. Lockers cost \$2 per day, plus a 10% "convenience fee."

The service is available in Denver, at UCLA, and at select stations of San Francisco's BART and Los Angeles' Metropolitan Transit Authority systems. As bicycling continues to roll as a viable commuting alternative, services and amenities that cater to bikers' special needs – like parking stations with showers and changing rooms and valet bike parking – are going to become more important. Bikers dial up for quick and easy ways to protect their bicycle investment.

Source: [Iconoculture]

SMS A Texxi

Technology firm Crane Dragon has begun testing a new taxi service in Liverpool that encourages travellers to text a taxi request via their mobiles, and then share the journey with other passengers going to the same area.

The 'Texxi' service allows users to text their house address and postcode to the Texxi SMS number.

The system will then aggregate other passengers wanting to go to the same area and confirm details of the taxi driver's name and badge number to the passengers.

Passengers will be directed to pre-determined 'muster points' to meet up with their driver who will have received a text confirming each passenger's booking reference.

Source: [NetImperative]

Pogo Airline-Taxi Service



It's time for a revolution in business travel. The commercial airline business is going through another round of bankruptcies, route shakeouts and confrontations with unions. Having fewer airlines will exacerbate the already lousy service that makes so many people hate to fly these days--the long waits, the delays, the cancelations, the lost

bags. Short flights aren't worth the hassle anymore. Since 2000, reports the Air Transport Association of America, there's been a 21% drop in passenger volume for flights of 500 miles or less.

Crandall and Burr are calling their air taxi service Pogo--after the stick that bounces, not Walt Kelly's cartoon possum. At this point it's little more than a grand plan, \$8 million in capital and a small fleet of new-generation lightweight jets on order. The idea is to introduce air travel on demand, using Web-based software to route small aircraft as needed. "The planes will go wherever the customers go," says Burr, 63. "If you're in Syracuse and want to go to Portland, Me., we will probably be over in Rochester and have to fly over and get you. You might say I want to go at 4 p.m., and we'll say, 'Yeah, we can't go at 4, but we can pick up at 4:30.'"

Pogo will begin service next year with a new class of six-seat minijets flying from North Carolina to Maine. The jets will fly point-to-point among the nation's largely underused 5,400 smaller airports, situated within a half hour's drive of 93% of Americans. These airports are free of the aggravating congestion of the 50 largest domestic hubs, through which 90% of travelers pass. "There're no ticket counters, no terminals and no baggage handlers," says Crandall, 68, who still chain-smokes his cigarettes down to the filter. "You drive up to the airport minutes before your flight, the pilot loads your bag and away you go."

Source: [Forbes]

Trends & Insights

Rise of the Jetrossexuals

A few years ago, a new sexual classification emerged on the scene. As funny as I thought it was when I first heard the term "metrosexual," I think it's even funnier that it stuck around. Oh no, metrosexuals weren't just a passing fad --people now comfortably identify themselves as such. Now it appears there is a new name for members of the fashion-forward jetsetting set,

"Jetrossexuals." Also known as "flash-packers," jetrossexuals revel in fashion and travel. Applied to individuals who travel worldwide in search of fashion bargains, jetrossexuals are known for having their passport ready to go at a moment's notice, and an eye for stylish, cheap faux couture clothing. Most commonly found travelling from the US to Asia in search of a bargain, jetrossexuals are known to carry little more with them than an iPod and the latest issue of Vogue. Apparently, the new trend is being fueled by two things: Ridiculous airline discounts that chop \$1000 fares to Asia to less than \$50 from gateway cities, and the booming Asian textile industry. And it's not just the jetrossexuals who are evolving -- the money spent on textiles and fashion in Vietnam has brought about dramatic change in the economic and cultural landscape of Hoi An. Although still congested and plagued with poverty, this city is now known as a tailoring hub. It all started years ago when European and American designers began outsourcing the production of their fabrics to Asia.

Source: [Fast Company]

Eatertainment for Kids

Forget swimming lessons and soccer, the latest trend in extracurricular activities for children ages 4 to 16 is cooking class. And not just any cooking class. There are culinary summer camps, cooking birthday parties, private cooking lessons, plus a plethora of new cookbooks for the young chef who aspires to be the next Rachael Ray or Bobby Flay.

"Part of what we are seeing is a trend in 'eatertainment' with all the cooking shows," says Stephen Hengst, spokesman for the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y.

Indeed, kids even make up a large part of the audiences for cooking shows, says Mark O'Connor, a spokesman for the Food Network, noting that at book-signings and public events, kids flock to see celebrities like Ray and superstar chef Emeril Lagasse.

"Based on our Web site traffic, message boards, mail questions and telephone calls, we know that there are a major amount of kids watching from as young as 5 up to 15 years old," O'Connor says.

For the parents of budding chefs, getting kids in the kitchen for something other than meals is about capturing a bit of nostalgia, says Hengst. "They used to cook with their mother or grandma, but life is so hectic they don't have time to do the same for their kids." So they send them, or go with them, to cooking class.



Source: [HeraldNewsOnline.com]

Smoothies War

In the 80s, fast-food burger joints flooded UK town centres. By the 90s, coffee shops took their place on every street corner.

But now that the noughties are well established, the new fast food fight is on a rather healthier battlefield. Warnings about obesity and increased awareness of the importance of eating five fruit a day have fuelled a surge in healthy eating. The UK smoothie market is worth £100m and doubling yearly.

London's Cruss, which opened its 15th branch just off Oxford Street in October, is the UK's biggest smoothie chain. The firm, now eight years old, expects to turn over more than £5m this year.

Source: [BBC]

Toddler Tech

From industry giants Mattel and Hasbro to smaller players LeapFrog and VTech, toy manufacturers are lowering the age ranges for their high-tech and educational offerings at this year's Toy Fair, betting that "toddler tech" will help reverse several years of slumping sales. But perhaps most alarming to the toy business is slumping sales, as video games, cell phones and MP3 players compete for kids' attention and parents' dollars. U.S. retail sales for the toy industry as a whole fell 3.6 percent to \$21.3 billion in 2005, according to NPD. That followed a decline of 3 percent in 2004.

The toy industry has responded by embracing technology, adding interactivity, creating whole new categories of educational toys and expanding the use of sophisticated electronics in products for kids as young as newborns. Notably, NPD said that sales of learning and exploration toys rose in 2005, adding 6 percent to \$400 million.

Source: [MercuryNews.com]

TV Advertising Trends

One of the great contradictions of modern American life is that almost everyone watches television while almost no one agrees anymore about what it really means to watch television. True, we know that as spring gets under way, new episodes of "Desperate Housewives" and "C.S.I." and "American Idol" will battle for prime-time supremacy in the overnight Nielsen ratings. We also know that local broadcast stations around the country will begin scheming -- just as they do every April -- to win the May sweeps, the tense weeks when rival stations pursue a fierce one-upmanship of flamboyance and hype and the Nielsen-measured audience sizes determine future advertising rates. But when it comes to figuring out how many of us are watching these shows, and whether we're paying attention while we're watching and even whether we're actually noticing the advertisements among the shows we may or may not be watching -- well, this is where things get tricky.

For the past decade or so, watching television in America has been defined by the families recruited by Nielsen Media Research who have agreed to have an electronic meter attached to their televisions or to record in a diary what shows they watch. This setup may not last much longer. Just as programmers and advertisers are clamoring for a better understanding of the television audience, a wave of new consumer products has made it increasingly difficult to satisfy them. One day this January I sat in a Greenwich Village workroom with Bob Luff, the chief technology officer at Nielsen, as he pulled out gadget after gadget to show me what he's up against. Luff seemed to view the modern American home as a digital zoo where the lion is about to lie down with the lamb: radio is going on the Web, TV is going on cellphones, the Web is going on TV and everything, it seems, is moving to video-on-demand (V.O.D.) and (quite possibly) the

iPod and the PlayStation Portable. "Television and media," Luff said over the noise of five sets tuned to five different channels, "will change more in the next 3 or 5 years than it's changed in the past 50."

Source: [The New York Times]

Local Shopping on the Internet

According to a study conducted by market researchers Constat Inc. and The Kelsey Group, 70 percent of American households now find local businesses using the Internet. A poll conducted in October 2003 found the figure to be 60 percent, with 73 percent using the local newspaper. If current trends continue, the Internet will become more popular for local business searches than newspapers in the next year.

Source: [NewsTarget]

Celebrity Smiles

Emulating A-listers such as Gwyneth Paltrow or Halle Berry is a snap: The latest celebrity-channeling accessory is a set of prosthetic choppers modeled after Hollywood's most Chiclet smiles.

Think of the snap-on smile as the white-enameled cousin to the press-on nail. Think of it as yet more evidence of a public firmly sinking its incisors into celebrity culture. Only with this device, attaining Julia Roberts' million-dollar grin doesn't set someone back nearly that much. The resin appliance, which fits snugly over existing teeth, goes for \$1,000 to \$3,000.

The teeth also are more proof of dentistry's changing focus. "It's not just for health," says Jeff Golub-Evans, a Manhattan cosmetic dentist. "More and more patients go to dentists to look better rather than to feel better."

Source: [Shreveport Times]

Student Job Sites Hit or Miss

Sure, it's still March, but summer's fast approaching. For a high school or college student, that means job-hunting season will soon be under way. Plenty of places on the internet are geared toward helping would-be employees find a job. But what if you're looking for seasonal or part-time employment -- is there a more appropriate place to hit up than traditional job sites?

Some websites cater to just those needs. GrooveJob.com, Teens4Hire.org and student-run newcomer JobSherpa.com purport to help students find jobs and refine their employment-seeking skills. Even the federal government has jumped into the act with its site, Studentjobs.gov.

The sites generally operate by charging employers a fee to advertise open positions. Students can search open postings for free, with or without registering, depending on the site. Some also offer extras like résumé-building help or tips for getting through an interview.

Those running the sites say they're more useful to students and those in their teens to early 20s than general job sites are because they list high-turnover, entry-level positions. They might also lead students to jobs with nontraditional hours for those with college schedules to accommodate.

Source: [Wired News]

Wireless

Smart WiFi Bunny

So you are probably wondering if a rabbit can really be "smart"? Well this bunny can teach you tai chi, read your e-mail, report the weather or stock market, pull RSS feeds and tell you the time. We'd say that's pretty smart - but he's also got personality. Nabaztag can move his ears, play music, talk and whistle, and his body can show off hundreds of colors and special patterns of light. Sometimes he will even have his own random things to say, as long as you can put up with his moods!



Okay, so Nabaztag is smart and has personality - but what about interpersonal skills? Can he relate well to you and other rabbits? Well, Nabaztag can marry another rabbit - that's right - copying the other rabbit's movements, sounds and lights. Move your Nabaztag's ears and its spouse's will too. And as far as friendship, Nabaztag can let you know when you have a new e-mail, read you today's headlines or give you his opinion of the previous week. But be careful because he is uncompromising - if he thinks that he didn't receive enough messages he might be unhappy.

This bunny likes to nibble on WiFi [ThinkGeek]

PetsMobility PetCell



The PetsMobility PetCell is only a concept for now, but the patent-pending collar could be great—if you don't mind spending a lot of extra cash on your pets. The idea is simple: it's a cell phone and GPS unit on a collar, with its own private number. Using caller ID, it automatically picks up when an approved number calls, allowing you to speak to your dog or cat (but probably dog) from wherever you are. And with the GPS service enabled, you'll even be able to yell at them

when they've wandered too far from home.

No word on an actual shipping product yet (their first announcement at all was in September), but it looks like something that could be surprisingly fun and useful for people who will spend any amount of money on their pooch.

Source: [Gizmodo]

Wearable Wireless

Motorola, Inc. and Oakley, Inc. today announced a joint venture to introduce new Bluetooth(TM)-enabled wearable wireless communications devices for innovative hands-free operation of electronic devices.

Motorola is collaborating with Oakley — a leader in eyewear design, technology and innovation — to fuse Motorola's latest Bluetooth technology with Oakley's advanced eyewear concepts. Motorola is a Fortune 100 global communications company. Details and designs are set to be unveiled by mid-2005.

"By teaming with Motorola, we're dramatically expanding the possibilities for our new electronics category," said Cos Lykos, Vice President of Business Development. "Oakley's engineering team now has an expanded technology arsenal to develop new and innovative electronic products."

Source: [wirelessIQ.info]

Smart Elevators

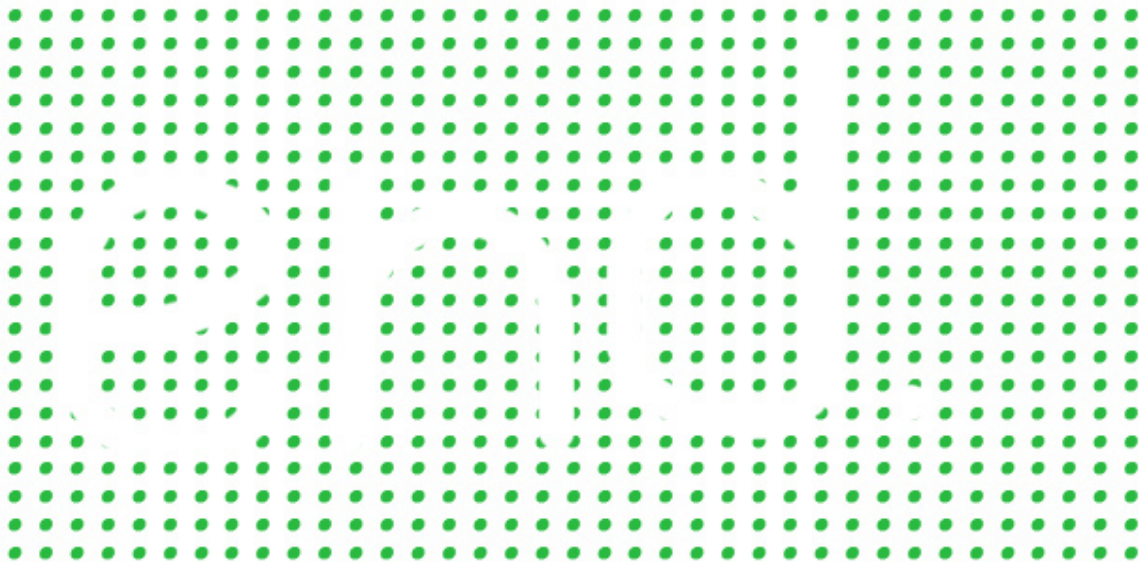
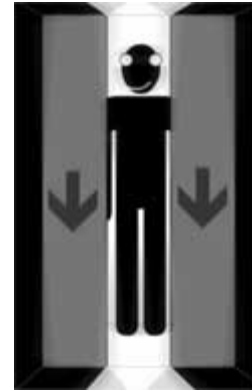
Mitsubishi Electric Corporation developed a technology that combines RFID tags and cameras for controlling elevators. With their technology, elevators don't make people wait for them. Instead, they wait for people.

By combining RFID and image processing, they claim that their system could tell if a person wanted to use an elevator or was just waking near an elevator (without any intention to use an elevator.)

This technology seems to have many useful applications -- Handicapped people and the elderly may be able to get on an elevator without the trouble of pushing buttons. Also, in an office building, employees could move back to their "home floors" without selecting a floor number everytime. Moreover, tags can be used to prevent unauthorized persons from getting on an elevator.

Some technical challenges still remain. The company wants to commercialize the technology in 5 years.

Source: [Nikkei Sangyo Shimbun]



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