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How technology affects all of us, and what to do about it. By WSJ columnist Jeremy Wagstaff

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December 15, 2005

Synchronize Outlook with Others

Collaboration is the next big thing for software. Not that people aren't trying, but I've not yet come across something that really solves the problem of people working together, needing to be able to see the same information etc. Here's a new and quite simple offering that will [synchronize your Outlook folders with other internet users](#):

OLFolderSync can synchronize any Microsoft Outlook folder with anyone else's (except Drafts, Outbox, Sent Items and Deleted Items). The folders you allow to be synchronized will do so in the background by e-mail. You can easily synchronize Outlook folders through the internet without the need for both parties to be online at the same time.

If you have private data elements on Outlook you can exclude them from the synchronization process. It is also possible to synchronize only objects of a user defined category.

The German company that does this, [Somebytes Software](#), suggests this would be useful for letting your

- PA add and amend appointments, tasks or other Outlook objects while on the other side of the world.
- Synchronize birthday dates with friends and family.
- Work with a synchronized Outlook calendar, tasks and other documents across your team.
- Synchronize Outlook data on your laptop with your desktop.
- Check appointments with those of colleagues on the road.
- Check club/association schedules with that of other members.
- Facilitate schedules to team members.

All pretty useful stuff, though a little steep at \$72 for a two person license. The web site is not easily navigable, but there seem to be other products that focus on synchronizing particular parts of Outlook, such as [the Calendar](#), [Tasks](#), or [Contacts](#).

December 15, 2005 in [Software](#), [Work](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

December 14, 2005

Earn Credit by Recruiting for Basecamp

Expanding on their brick by brick, basics for free, pay for what you need approach, the guys at 37 Signals are now offering an [Affiliate Program where users can earn free services](#):

ADS

Blogads



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MY ONLINE STATUS

 ICQ: 1596802 Yahoo: [jeremy_wagstaff](#) AIM: [jezwag](#) Skype: [jwagstaff](#)

SOFTWARE WORTH CHECKING OUT

[1st TurboRun](#)

Fast access to files and programs

[ActiveWords](#)

Do everything without leaving the keyboard

[Anagram](#)

Translates copied text into Contact, Calendar, Task, and Note items for Outlook, Palm etc

[BlogJet](#)

Weblog client for Windows that allows you to manage your blog

The Basecamp Affiliate Program allows you to earn credits that are applied towards your Basecamp account. These credits reduce your subscriptions fees and allow you to earn free service. It's your reward for helping us spread the word about Basecamp. EVERYONE who has a Basecamp account is eligible! When someone uses your affiliate code/link to sign up for a new account, you'll receive a credit on your account after they've paid for their first month.

It's not particularly new in itself, but for products like [Basecamp](#) and [Backpack](#) it makes a lot of sense. The basic features of these products – some of which are hived off as separate tools, like [Writeboard](#) and [Ta-da List](#) – are free but users who like the tools will quickly find they want the paid product. Now they can by corraling others into coughing up.

December 14, 2005 in [E-commerce](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

The Mobility Mouse

The mighty mouse has never really worked for anyone on the road – and those poor suckers you see who try and use the laptop's trackpad need our help – but one or two folk have tried to ease the navigational pain. Here's another one, out early next year: The MoGo Mouse:



The [website](#) ain't public yet, and I have yet to play with the thing, but I'm told it's a business card, Bluetooth-enabled mouse that stores neatly inside a laptop computer's PC slot when it's not being used. It uses Bluetooth to communicate with your laptop, so no need for cables. The two indentations on its top enable left- and right-clicking, while a "kickstand" locks into place, automatically levering the full-width MoGo MouseBT into a natural position in the user's hand. And in case you're wondering, MoGo stands for "mobility on the go."

I look forward to playing with it. Anyone who can make mobile mouse usage better has my attention. Launch is planned at CES in January.

December 14, 2005 in [Gadgets](#), [Input & Interfaces](#), [Inventions](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

The First U.S.-China Cyberwar?

There's growing coverage of China's Internet 'cyberwar' against the U.S., which seems to have been going on for more than two years with neither side wanting to go public. The U.S. is calling the attack Titan Rain, and as [Bruce Schneier points out](#), the attackers are very well organized. This from [AFP](#):

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Increase productivity and unlock the full potential of multiple monitors.

[VyooH DiskView](#)

Visually see disk space usage in Windows Explorer

CONNECTIONS



A systematic effort by hackers to penetrate US government and industry computer networks stems most likely from the Chinese military, the head of a leading security institute said. The attacks have been traced to the Chinese province of Guangdong, and the techniques used make it appear unlikely to come from any other source than the military, said Alan Paller, the director of the SANS Institute, an education and research organization focusing on cybersecurity. "These attacks come from someone with intense discipline. No other organization could do this if they were not a military organization," Paller said in a conference call to announced a new cybersecurity education program. In the attacks, Paller said, the perpetrators "were in and out with no keystroke errors and left no fingerprints, and created a backdoor in less than 30 minutes. How can this be done by anyone other than a military organization?"

So what are they after? Paller says they're after sensitive information, and may have gotten it, including military flight planning software from its Redstone Arsenal. Here's a bit more detail about how these guys work, [from a TIME story quoting Shawn Carpenter](#), the hacker who uncovered the attacks:

Carpenter had never seen hackers work so quickly, with such a sense of purpose. They would commandeer a hidden section of a hard drive, zip up as many files as possible and immediately transmit the data to way stations in South Korea, Hong Kong or Taiwan before sending them to mainland China. They always made a silent escape, wiping their electronic fingerprints clean and leaving behind an almost undetectable beacon allowing them to re-enter the machine at will. An entire attack took 10 to 30 minutes.

More on Carpenter in a Wikipedia entry [here](#), and on his whistleblowing experience [here](#). There's an interesting [piece by SearchSecurity's Bill Brenner](#) which looks at an [August report by LURHQ](#) dissecting the Myfip worm which appears to have been used by Chinese hackers to ferret around and grab PDF files. The worm has been around since August 2004. Later variants looked for Word documents, AutoCAD drawings, templates, Microsoft Database files, etc:

[Joe] Stewart [senior security researcher with Chicago-based security management firm LURHQ Corp] said his team was easily able to trace the source of Myfip and its variants. "They barely make any effort to cover their tracks," he said. And in each case, the road leads back to China. Every IP address involved in the scheme, from the originating SMTP hosts to the "document collector" hosts, are all based there, mostly in the Tianjin province.

China, according to AFP, [yesterday denied](#) its military was involved in hacking:

"We have clear stipulations against hacking. No one can use the internet to engage in illegal activities," foreign ministry spokesman Qin Gang told a regular briefing on Tuesday. "The Chinese police will deal with hacking and other activities disturbing social order in accordance with law."

Doesn't make a lot of sense as a denial. Is he saying no one is doing it? Or no one official? Or that it's going on and the police will deal with it? Not the first time a Chinese spokesman has uttered something meaningless. But I guess so long as the U.S. doesn't make any official, public complaint this guerrilla war will remain unacknowledged by both sides. I guess the obvious lesson here is that security is not just against sleazeballs after your money, but after your PDF files too. And don't think that because you're not military you're not affected. If you're any kind of company you might have something that is valuable in the corporate and government espionage world.

[Yahoo! Search Bar](#)

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December 11, 2005

The Last Chapter in the Wikipedia Tale?

So we now know who was behind the [Wikipedia Seigenthaler entry](#) : [the prankster has confessed](#).

It started as a joke and ended up as a shot heard round the Internet, with the joker quitting his job and Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, suffering a blow to its credibility. A man in Nashville, Tenn., has admitted that, in trying to shock a colleague with a joke, he put false information into a Wikipedia entry about John Seigenthaler Sr., a former editor of The Tennessean newspaper in Nashville.

Brian Chase, 38, who until Friday was an operations manager at a small delivery company, told Seigenthaler he had written the material suggesting Seigenthaler had been involved in the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy. Seigenthaler discovered the false entry only recently and wrote about it in an op-ed article in USA Today, saying he was especially annoyed that he could not track down the perpetrator because of Internet privacy laws.

Ah, well. Next question: How many other similar entries are there?

December 11, 2005 in [Internet life](#), [Organizing](#), [productivity](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

December 10, 2005

After del.icio.us, a Directory of Other Things Yahoo! Should Buy

The Loose Wire Yahoo Blessing continues, as [del.icio.us gets bought by y.ah.oo!](#). From Joshua Schacter's blog:

We're proud to announce that del.icio.us has joined the Yahoo! family. Together we'll continue to improve how people discover, remember and share on the Internet, with a big emphasis on the power of community. We're excited to be working with the Yahoo! Search team - they definitely get social systems and their potential to change the web. (We're also excited to be joining our fraternal twin Flickr!)

Congratulations, Joshua. A lot of people still don't seem to get del.icio.us; I'm glad Yahoo! does. As Jeremy Zawodny of Yahoo! Search [puts it](#):

And just like we've done with Flickr, we plan to give del.icio.us the resources, support, and room it needs to continue growing the service and community. Finally, don't be surprised if you see My Web and del.icio.us borrow a few ideas from each other in the future.

It's probably good news for del.icio.us, but there are [those who think the touch](#) of Yahoo! isn't always as light as it could be

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~~smirk the touch~~ of Yahoo! isn't always as tight as it could be. For my part I'm smugly totting up the services I've tried to champion over the years that have ended up getting bought by Yahoo! There was [oddpst](#); [Upcoming](#); [Bloomba](#); [Konfabulator](#) and [Flickr](#). Of course, lots of other people loved these products too, but it's uncanny how I get excited about something and then Yahoo! wanders in and buys it.

So here are a few other things I like:

- [Text Monkey](#): Easily clean copied text
- [blummy](#): Great bookmarklet aggregator
- [MSGTAG - MessageTag](#): Email receipt alert
- [Klips](#): you got Konfabulator; buy the rest
- [Anagram](#): Translates copied text into Contact, Calendar, Task, and Note items for Outlook, Palm etc
- [Multiplicity](#): Control all your computers from one keyboard n mouse
- [TiddlyWikis](#): ~~they're not for sale but~~ they're great
- [ActiveWords](#): Do everything without leaving the keyboard
- [37Signals](#): The whole Writeboard, Basecamp, Tadalist thing
- Flock: great browser, good way to pull all Yahoo!'s juicy new bits together (thanks, [Tom](#))
- [clipmarks](#): don't save bookmarks, save clipmarks
- [MyInfo](#): free-form information organizer

Thassall for now.

December 10, 2005 in [Resources](#), [Search](#), [Software](#), [Tags](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

A Directory of Monitor Extenders

This week's [WSJ.com Loose Wire](#) column (subscription only, I'm afraid) is on [getting more screen for nothing](#):

People of the future will laugh at us for many reasons, no doubt, but one of the most likely sources of their mirth will be the miserly size of our computer screens. It isn't that our screens haven't gotten bigger, both in size and in what we can fit on them (this is the so-called resolution, allowing smaller fonts and images so we can pack more on, so long as our eyesight holds up).

I've written about the joys of having two monitors before, and I'm still surprised that very few people do it. Mind you, I was called a dinosaur yesterday by someone who has a 23" screen, so I guess I can't get too snooty. Anyway, the column mentions a couple of programs you might want to try out:

- MaxiVista (\$30 from [www.maxivista.com](#)), which lets you use your network to extend your existing screen onto those of your other computers. *It's like buying a second or third monitor, but without actually having to, because you are using the screens you already have. I*
- Multiplicity (\$40 to \$70 from [www.thinkdesk.net](#)). *Multiplicity does something similar to MaxiVista -- corralling extra computers on your network -- but instead of enslaving them to become one long screen for one computer, it creates a team of computers under one boss. In short, you control all the computers from one keyboard, and one mouse. (Update: The guys at MaxiVista tell me that their product does the same thing, but I haven't tested this feature. Thanks, Mario)*
- For Mac and Linux users (and Windows users who don't mind a less friendly interface, or don't have any money) there's [Synergy](#), which does more or less what Multiplicity does.

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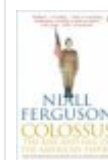
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- And there's also a Mac-only freeware program called [teleport](#). (Thanks, Julian)

I'm now using Multiplicity to run a separate laptop next to my two-screen rig, which is running iTunes, my Skype stuff, as well as doing some backups, running my [Klips](#) among other things. Takes the load of the main rig, and yet I don't have to move a muscle to run it.



Then there are a few other bits and bobs you could try out to grab extra screen real estate.

- If you do have two screens use [Ultramon](#) to control them. Adds some excellent management features to Windows rather basic support for more than one monitor. The guy who runs Ultramon also has an [excellent resource page about multi-screen systems](#).
- There are lots of Desktop Managers out there, which basically let you have lots of screens on one. Microsoft's own version is called the Virtual Desktop Manager and it's included in [the PowerToys for XP](#). There are lots of others. I know some folk love these set ups but I've never gotten too excited about them. Sorry.
- Another approach is [WindowSizer](#), which gives you more control over how you manage and rearrange your windows. I love the idea but I've never quite mastered it. I'm still looking for a program that lets me organise my windows *really easily* and then remembers the layout until I tell it not to.

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December 07, 2005

The Penguin Embraces the Frog

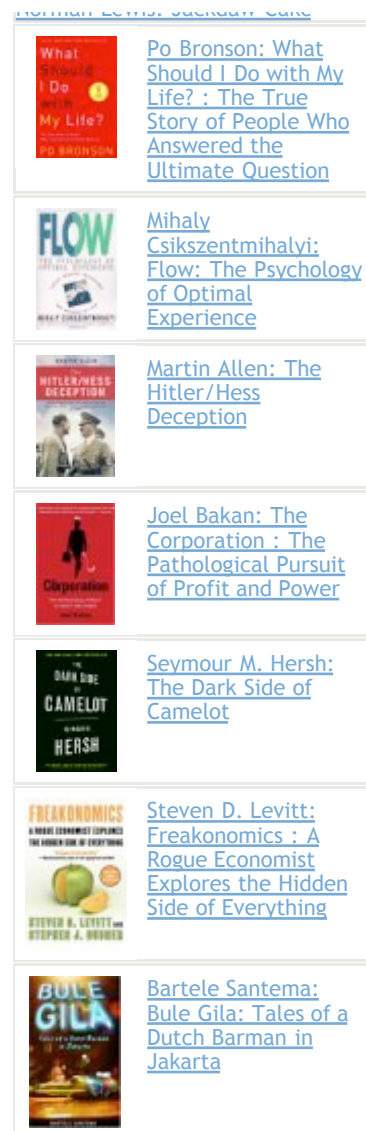
Blue Frog, the anti-spam 'vigilante' software [that has courted some controversy](#), has [introduced a Linux Version](#) :

This new offering will enable the 29 million Linux platform users to participate in the Blue Community and register in the company's Do Not Intrude Registry to actively fight spam and safeguard personal and business e-mail accounts through a hands-on, community-based approach.

The Linux version of Blue Frog was created directly through the contributions of Blue Community members and Linux developers and enthusiasts at large. The Blue Frog visible source program allows users and developers to contribute to the development of the Blue Frog client by providing feedback and comments to the company to enhance the Blue Frog software and assist in adapting it to other platforms. Users and developers can click to join the Blue Frog development effort.

The press release from the company, Blue Security, says that

[s]ince the launch of the Do Not Intrude Registry in the summer of 2005, approximately 65,000 e-mail addresses have been registered and protected through



the Blue Community. Preliminary results of the Beta service have users reporting 50 percent or greater reduction in the amount of spam they receive, indicating that a number of spammers already comply with the Registry and avoid sending spam to Blue Security customers.

December 07, 2005 in [Security](#), [Software](#), [Spam](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

The Phisher King is Back

I'm glad to report Australian phisher king Daniel McNamara has revived his Code Phish website which dissects phishing attacks and associated scams. He's just taken a close peek at one 'mule ad' (as I call them) or job scam as he calls them: [DHL Mail Job Scam](#). These are efforts by the phishers to repatriate their illicit earnings by hiring unsuspecting individuals to let the stolen funds pass through their accounts. It seems that Eastern Europe is still the main source of such scams:

What's really interesting however is where this scam is located. It's sitting on the same hoster as the Ukrainian National Animal Welfare Foundation Job Scam and the GlobalFinances Job Scam. This would indicate they are mostly likely all being run by the same gang. The hoster is probably unaware of these sites scam status but we have seen them used numerous times over the last year to host scam sites which would indicate they most likely offer some sort of "get hosting working in minutes!" automatic setup for payments by credit cards and if it's one things phishers have steady access to, it's stolen credit card details.

Welcome back, Daniel.

December 07, 2005 in [Phishing](#), [Security](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

December 06, 2005

Give Your Mouse A Bath

Those who got excited about the idea of a washable keyboard (which I wrote about in a [WSJ.com column](#) a few weeks back – sorry, subscription only; a version appeared on the BBC World Service, and is available [as a podcast](#)) can now get excited about [Washable Computer Mice, from Unotron](#):

Unotron's pioneering mice design configurations and materials allow these patented products to be easily washed, immersed and disinfected by commercial-grade detergents and anti-bacterial agents while providing users with comfort, control and reliability. SpillSeal washable mice are manufactured and assembled to support restrictive cleaning/disinfection procedures without any detrimental effect to the exterior or the products' internal components.

Makes sense, actually. As I realised when I was doing the keyboard column, we spend an inordinate amount of time with our fingers on these things, and while we may not spend quite as much time using the mouse, there's still enough gunky activity going on for us to pay the same attention to keeping the little rodents clean. Sadly no pictures or details of mice

having a bath are available on [Unotron's website](#) yet, so here's a picture of a keyboard getting washed instead:



December 06, 2005 in [Gadgets](#), [Hardware](#), [Internet life](#), [Organizing, productivity](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)