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Bet You Missed It -- Press Clippings -- In the News -- Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

Bruce Strauch
The Citadel

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Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

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Column Editor’s Note: Hey, are you reading this? Your esteemed column editor would like to know what you think! Zip off a quick email to <pmrose@buffalo.edu>. Does BYMi fill your needs? Do you have any suggestions for changes? I’m listening! — PR

NEW TECH FOR THE CLASSROOM
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

The iPod, Steve Jobs’ new brainchild, is poised for a major impact on education delivery. Eighty percent of the students at the Medical University of South Carolina own one of these Apple gadgets. In South Carolina, MUSC, USC at Columbia and Clemson join Stanford, Brown, Duke, U-Wis Madison, the dental school at U-Michigan, and the journalism school at the U-Missouri. An elite group selected by Apple to receive free space on its iTunes Website. That will mean an explosion in podcasts delivering lectures and graphics.


THERE’S BIG BUCKS IN CLAIRVOYANCE
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Psychic author Sylvia Brown — If You Could See What I See — has fifteen books in print which adds to seven million hardcovers and paperbacks. She’s so wildly successful, two rival publishers are content to share her — Dutton and Harper’s. A claimed medium and clairvoyant, she talks to the dead, sees the future and solves crime.

While a slew of academics scoff at her claims, she appears on Montel Williams and charges $700 for a telephone reading. She draws an estimated 75,000 listeners to her lectures annually at a charge of $75 a head.

And if you don’t have that $700 for a phone call, her son will take you call for $400.


SO WHO NEEDS A CAMPUS?
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Overall college enrollment is stagnant, but online is booming. State U is leading the charge. UMass has 9,200, mostly working adults. Univ of MD University College, the open-enrollment arm of UMD, has 51,000. Projections nationwide are for one in ten students to be online by 2008.


COPYCAT WEBSITES JAM THE WEB
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

“Original content” on the Web has exploded as owners try to get hits that will bring them ad revenue. But most is not so original; in fact cut-and-paste jobs with superficial changes. The Journal’s investigative reporter was offered $100 to modify a bird flu article lifted verbatim from the WHO Website. His conclusion was much legitimate information was being crowded out by junky, spammy imitations.

And imagine what professors and librarians are having to deal with from students.


PRINT NEWS MEDIA TWISTS IN THE WIND, SLOWLY.
by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Fear, depression and denial reign as print news continues its slow death of cancellations and sliding ad revenue. But the American Society of Newspaper Editors is acting upbeat in their annual meeting. They claim it’s a mere cyclical downturn despite more than half of the USA not reading the news. Any day now they’ll find a new “diversified business model” which is to say they’ll figure out a way to make readers pay for the Web.

See — Elizabeth Gillespie, “Editors Seek Next Format for Newspaper Content,” The Post and Courier, April 28, 2006, p.7B.

Against the Grain / June 2006

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>
Innovations Affecting Us — Do Web Applications Need to be Cleaned Up?

Column Editor: Kristen DeVoe (Electronic Resources Librarian, College of Charleston) <devoek@cofc.edu>

Since their introduction Web-based applications have rapidly undergone enormous change to improve functionality and the user experience. With the introduction of new Web development languages or Web applications, marked improvements have been made but user expectations continue to rise as functionality improves. With regards to efficiency, functionality, and user experience, the Web of today is stuck in the past in many ways. So what will the Web of the future be like and how will we get there? For some Web developers, the answer to those questions lies with a Web development technique frequently referred to as Ajax. Ajax and Ajax-based Web applications have quickly become the topic of frequent discussion among Web developers and is something to be aware of as the Web continues to evolve.

What is Ajax?

Asynchronous JavaScript and XML, frequently referred to as Ajax, is not a newly created language or technology. The sum of its parts, Ajax is an incorporation of several familiar technologies working in kind to create a more interactive Web environment for users. The main technologies at play in Ajax include the following:

- **JavaScript** as the scripting language that Ajax applications are written in. JavaScript defines the user workflow of the Ajax application.
- **XHTML (Extensible Hypertext Markup Language)** and **CSS (Cascading Style Sheets)** for standards based content mark-up and presentation. These define the look and feel of the application. In Ajax Web applications the styling of a user interface can be modified interactively using CSS.
- **The DOM (Document Object Model)** presents the structure of Web pages as a set of programmable objects that can be manipulated with JavaScript. Scripting the DOM allows Ajax applications to modify the user interface quickly or “on the fly.”

- **The HttpRequest object** for asynchronous data retrieval. This allows Web programmers to retrieve data from the Web server as a background activity.

**So What Can Ajax Do for Web Applications?**

Ajax helps to unlock much of the unrealized potential of modern Web browser technologies. One way that Ajax overcomes a major limitation in traditional Web applications is by exchanging small amounts of data with the server asynchronously behind the scenes of the Web application. The intent of this design is to make Web pages feel more responsive, so that the entire Web page does not have to be reloaded each time the user makes a change. With traditional Web applications each time the user makes a change to the page, such as executing a search in an internal search engine or adding an item to an online shopping cart, the entire page must reload anytime the user requests new data.

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