

All News, All the Time

Matthew Jones

To do your job well, you need to stay current with the computing industry. Because technology is constantly changing, however, this task may seem impossible. Fortunately, the web sites featured in this article can come to your rescue by providing up-to-the-minute technology news.

After you have caught up on the latest developments in the computing world, you can check out this month's network resource and games. You can also read about the new products I have found. (See "Product Snapshots.")

WEB SITES

CNET News (<http://news.cnet.com>) covers every aspect of the computing industry, offering news stories about everything from e-commerce to the year-2000 problem. You can read all of the week's top news stories, or you can access news stories by category. If you register as a member of CNET News, you

can even create a customized news page that displays only the news stories you are interested in.

Like CNET News, the Andover News Network (<http://www.andovernews.com>) provides news stories about the computing industry. But the Andover News Network offers more than just news. Among other things, you can download utilities, and you can see whether a particular domain name has already been registered. You can also take advantage of links to the many web sites that are part of the Andover News Network. For example, you can check out the Internet Traffic Report and the IT Manager's Journal.

Red Herring (<http://www.redherring.com>) also offers a range of resources. In addition to news stories, you can access information about venture capital firms and initial public offerings (IPOs). You can also view a calendar of upcoming technology events. You can even discuss news stories with other

Product Snapshots

When I am surfing the Internet, I often find new and interesting products. Product Snapshots gives you a quick overview of the most useful products I have found during the last month. (Please note that these are first-look reviews; I have not conducted exhaustive testing.)

REPLAYTV

ReplayTV from Replay Networks Inc. is a set-top box that performs as a digital recorder. The ReplayTV device is approximately the size of a VCR, with an internal SCSI hard drive. This hard drive allows you to record television, cable, or satellite programming in MPEG-2 format.

The amount of programming you can record depends on the size of the hard drive. ReplayTV is available in three versions, including a hard drive that records either 8, 14, or 28 hours of programming. The recording time is based on a recording rate of 2 Mbps, which offers the recording quality of a standard VCR. For better recording quality, you can also select a recording rate of 4 or 6 Mbps. However, you cannot record as much programming with these recording rates.

You can program ReplayTV by selecting programs from a digital programming guide that displays a list of shows offered through your local TV, cable, or satellite company. In addition, you can program ReplayTV by entering keywords. ReplayTV then records all programs that feature these keywords in the programming guide.

ReplayTV also provides several features that you can use while you are watching television. For example, if you are interrupted during a program, you can pause the program in progress. If you miss a line of dialog, you can see an instant replay. You can even fast-forward to skip over commercials.

You can purchase ReplayTV beginning at the suggested retail price of U.S. \$699. For more information about ReplayTV, visit Replay Networks's web site (<http://www.replaytv.com>). You can also call 1-800-266-1301 or 1-650-210-1000.

DS ANALYZER

DS Analyzer from NetPro Computing Inc. allows you to monitor and troubleshoot your company's Novell Directory Services (NDS) tree. DS Analyzer gathers NDS traffic and utilization information from across the entire network and displays this information in a graphical format. DS Analyzer gathers and displays information for every aspect of the NDS tree, including users, servers, partitions, and background processes.

With DS Analyzer, you can view a global representation of the NDS tree, or you can drill down to isolate problem areas. You can also view NDS traffic and utilization reports over a period of time to detect patterns and to compare these reports with the baseline you have set. You can then fine-tune the NDS structure to improve NDS traffic and utilization.

You can purchase DS Analyzer over the Internet at the suggested retail price of U.S. \$12 per User object. For more information about DS Analyzer, visit NetPro's web site (<http://www.netpro.com>). You can also call 1-800-998-5090 or 1-480-941-3600. ●



Seven Kingdoms II: The Fryhtan Wars from Enlight Software

users through the Red Herring discussion boards.

NETWORK RESOURCE

After catching up on technology news, you should stop by shopnovell (<http://shop.novell.com/shopnovell>). Of course, Novell is not the only software company to sell its products online. But Novell has created one of the most comprehensive web sites for selling its products. At shopnovell, you can purchase a range of products, such as NetWare, GroupWise, ManageWise, BorderManager, and ZENworks. You can also purchase upgrades, additional licenses, software bundles, evaluation versions, and utility toolkits.

shopnovell is not limited to software. You can purchase training products both from Novell and from third-party companies. You can even subscribe to *Novell AppNotes* and *Novell Developer Notes*. At present, you can purchase products through shopnovell only if you live in the United States. However, Novell plans to support international users in the near future.

STANDALONE GAME OF THE MONTH

Hoyle Casino from Sierra On-line Inc. brings the fun and excitement of Las Vegas directly to your desktop. With Hoyle Casino, you can play eight games with more than 100 variations, including poker, blackjack, roulette, craps, keno, and slots. As you play, you can access tutorials, strategies, and hints to help you master each game.

Hoyle Casino features realistic 3-D graphics that make you feel as if you are

in the middle of an actual casino. Hoyle Casino also features 10 interactive characters that you can compete against. Each of these characters has a unique playing style. As a result, you can improve your gaming skills as you try to match each player's strengths and take advantage of his or her weaknesses.

Hoyle Casino is available for Win-

dows 98, 95, 3.1, and Macintosh. You can purchase Hoyle Casino through retail channels at the suggested retail price of U.S. \$29.95, and you can download a demo version of the game from <http://www.sierra.com/attractions/hoyle/casinogames>. For more information about Hoyle Casino, visit Sierra Online's web site (<http://www.sierra.com>). You can also call 1-800-757-7707 or 1-425-746-5771.

NETWORK GAME OF THE MONTH

Seven Kingdoms II: The Fryhtan Wars from Enlight Software is the sequel to Seven Kingdoms, a real-time strategy game. As the game begins, the Fryhtans, which are part of a monster race, are trying to enslave the human race. You can choose to be the leader of an ancient human civilization, or you can play as the leader of a Fryhtan horde. If you choose to control a human civilization, your mission is to overthrow the Fryhtans. If you choose to control the Fryhtans, on the other hand, your goal is to conquer the humans, eliminating those who put up resistance and enslaving the rest.

Seven Kingdoms II features 12 human civilizations, such as Chinese, Egyptian, and Roman. If you play as a human, you try to help your civilization progress so you can take on the Fryhtans. You assign various jobs to members of your civilization, sending them to construct buildings or to work in mines, factories, and laboratories. The decisions you make determine how your civilization develops. For example, building military installations allows you to train different types of military personnel, and

researching technologies allows you to use different types of weapons.

During the course of the game, you must fend off attacks from the Fryhtans. After you have created a strong military, you must attack the Fryhtans. If you choose to build temples, you can even call on mythological gods to aid your cause.

You can play Seven Kingdoms II against the computer or against one other person over a serial or a modem connection. You can also play with up to seven other people over an IPX or a TCP/IP connection.

Seven Kingdoms II supports Windows NT, 98, and 95. You can purchase Seven Kingdoms II through retail channels at the suggested retail price of U.S. \$29.95, and you can download a trial version of the game from <http://www.sevenkingdoms2.com>. For more information about Seven Kingdoms II, visit Enlight's web site (<http://www.enlight.com>). You can also call 1-800-789-1534.

Matthew Jones is a manager in the e-commerce practice group of Waterstone Consulting, a business consulting and systems integration firm located in Chicago, Illinois. ●

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