Sports lovers rejoice! This month is one of the busiest months for sports fans: March Madness is heating up college basketball (my personal favorite). Spring training for Major League Baseball and Major League Soccer is in full swing, and the regular seasons start later this month. The National Hockey League (NHL) and National Basketball Association (NBA) are heading toward the playoffs. In addition, the world is gearing up for the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

The web sites in this article feature statistics, schedules, and virtual communities so that you can keep track of your favorite teams and athletes. After the final buzzer sounds, be sure to check out this month's network resource, game, and "Product Snapshots."

WEB SITES

FAN Sonly (http://www.fansonly.com) brings together fans of college athletics. FAN Sonly features news, statistics and schedules, polls, and recruiting updates. FAN Sonly also provides a schedule of games that will be broadcast on national television. You can even access live statistics and audio clips for games that are currently being played. In addition, FAN Sonly includes links to the official web sites of your favorite Division I college athletic teams.

If you want to interact with other college sports fans, be sure to visit the FAN Sonly interactive section. In this section, you can join the virtual community of fans discussing the latest polls, you can lobby support for your favorite team, or you can talk to fans of a rival team.

Product Snapshots

New advancements in technology always bring new gadgets and toys. Product Snapshots gives you a quick look at new technology that we find particularly interesting. (Please note that these are first-look reviews; we have not conducted exhaustive testing.)

EBeam
EBeam from Electronic for Imaging Inc. is a portable and easy way to capture meeting notes and diagrams as you create them. EBeam is different from traditional electronic whiteboards, which are typically large, pressure-sensitive systems. EBeam uses a system of wireless sensors to capture movement in two dimensions. EBeam can be used on almost any writing surface, including whiteboards, flipcharts, and posters.

You can carry EBeam with you, no matter where your presentation takes you. The EBeam system weighs under a pound and consists of four digital pen sleeves, two palm-sized sensors, and a digital eraser.

To use EBeam, you simply attach the sensors to the corners of your writing surface and slip your marker into the digital pen sleeves. The EBeam sensors capture and digitize the movements of your marker on the writing surface and then transmit these movements to the host computer. EBeam’s Windows-based application interface enables users to view, save, edit, share, and print the presentation.

In addition, EBeam’s web software carries your presentation across the globe by enabling people to view the presentation in real time from anywhere via the Internet. Using a Java-enabled browser, users can log in to the host computer and watch the presentation as it occurs. (However, users who are viewing the presentation via the Internet cannot make notes on the presentation and make these notes available to other users.)

EBeam is available through retail channels for the suggested price of U.S. $549. You can find more information about EBeam at http://www.e-beam.com. You can also call 1-877-463-2326.

LCI SMARTpen

The LCI SMARTpen from LCI Technology Group is a ball-point pen with sensors that allow you to use the pen as a biometric authentication device. The LCI SMARTpen features a wireless minicomputer that measures the biometric characteristics of your signature, such as writing speed, pressure, and angle. The LCI SMARTpen then encrypts this information inside the pen and transmits it to the network. This transmitted information can be compared to your reference signature. If the signatures match, you are authenticated to the network. Because the sensors are included inside the pen, no special writing tablet is needed: You can simply sign on regular paper.

The LCI SMARTpen can also be used in conjunction with smart cards. These smart cards hold the reference signature information to authenticate users to systems that do not contain the reference signature.

The retail price for the LCI SMARTpen ranges between U.S. $50 and U.S. $250, depending on your company’s system requirements. For more information about the LCI SMARTpen, visit http://www.smartpen.net. You can also call 1-800-330-0473. Outside of the United States or Canada, you can call +31 (0)73 6455291 (The Netherlands).
If you are an armchair athlete, you will want to check out SportsRocket.com (http://www.sportsrocket.com). SportsRocket.com features a variety of sports-related contests for you to enter. For example, you can enter fantasy sports contests such as fantasy hockey and fantasy basketball. You can also enter pick-the-winner contests, and you can test your sports trivia knowledge. The best part is that you can win real prizes and money. In addition, SportsRocket.com includes online statistics of your favorite teams and players, making it even easier to pick a winning team.

SportsRocket.com also features an auction section where you can buy and sell sports memorabilia and sporting goods. Sellers at this auction site will be happy to know that auction entries appear on more than 30 different auction sites.

The official web site of the 2000 Summer Olympics (http://www.olympics.org) is a comprehensive web site that features everything you want to know about the Olympic games that will be held in Sydney, Australia, from September 15 through October 1. Olympics.org includes sections about the athletes, the Olympic sports, the venues and schedules of the games, and the countries participating in the games.

For example, in the sports section, you can find out about a specific sport’s schedule during the 2000 games as well as that sport’s history and rules. In the athletes section, you can find out about the athletes who will compete at the games.

Olympics.org also includes information about the proceedings surrounding the Olympic games, such as qualifying events and the paralympics. (The paralympics is held in conjunction with the Olympics for elite athletes with physical disabilities.) Olympics.org also includes an online store where you can purchase official Olympic merchandise.

Yack.com (http://www.yack.com/content/sports) is an online program guide to sporting events on the Internet. At Yack.com, you can find out about special events, such as online chats with your favorite athletes. You can also find out about sports that are being broadcast on the Internet.

Yack.com provides basic information about the event, such as the date and time, the software you will need to participate in the event, and any fees required. Yack.com also provides a link directly to the web site that is broadcasting the event.

If you tend to get busy and forget about these types of events, you can sign up for Yack.com’s e-mail reminder service. Yack.com will then send you an e-mail message reminding you of the upcoming events you have specified.

NETWORK RESOURCE

Novell’s democity (http://democity.novell.com) gives you the opportunity to test drive Novell’s products before you purchase them. For example, if you are interested in Novell’s Internet products, you can click Internet to see a list of Novell’s Internet products. Each product has its own section where you can find an introduction to the features of the product, an explanation of how these features can enhance your company’s network, and an interactive demonstration of how

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the product works. In addition, each product page includes links to additional information about the product, such as Novell Education offerings that support the product.

Democity also features interactive demonstrations from some of Novell’s partners. For example, you can view demonstrations from companies such as Oblix Inc. and NetPro Computing Inc.

NETWORK GAME OF THE MONTH

Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear from Red Storm Entertainment Inc. is the sequel to the popular Rainbow Six game based on Tom Clancy’s novel of the same name. Rogue Spear is a special operations counter-terrorism simulation. You take the role of the commander of a top-secret, international antiterrorism force code named Rainbow. Your mission is to plan and execute missions ranging from hostage rescue to bomb defusion, thus saving the world from the threat of terrorism.

Each mission you undertake in Rogue Spear is increasingly difficult. First, you must liberate a group of hostages from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Subsequent missions lead you to diffuse bombs, protect the water supply, tackle a hijacked 747, and fight terrorists on the streets of Kosovo. As the missions unfold, you realize that you are not fighting a single group of terrorists. Rather, you (and the world) are facing threats from the Russian Mafia and from a Middle Eastern terrorist organization.

Rogue Spear includes two stages: planning and action. In the planning stage, you assign your eight-member team roles, weapons, gadgets, and costumes. In the action stage, you must execute your plan and adjust that plan, depending on the actions of the terrorists. And beware—around every corner lies a new threat.

Rogue Spear includes several improvements over the original Rainbow Six game. Improved graphics allow characters to move with fluidity. In addition, the enhanced graphics create realistic weather and environmental conditions. For example, you can see the frozen breath of your team as you fight through snow, and you can see the footprints left by your team.

In addition, Rogue Spear provides a whole new arsenal of weapons. However, the terrorists also have new weapons—a single shot can kill you almost before you know what has happened. And, just in case you miss something, you can select the action replay feature.

Rogue Spear ships with a mission editor, which makes it possible for you to create your own scenarios. You can also download scenarios developed by other Rogue Spear aficionados.

Rogue Spear supports Windows 98 and 95. You can play Rogue Spear with up to 16 other people over the Internet or a LAN connection. You can also play with one other person over a modem connection. For more information about Rogue Spear, visit http://www.redstorm.com/rogue_spear. You can also call 1-919-460-1776.

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