

Technology

A Look at Recent Tech Happenings

Web comics have foothold on internet culture

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Entertainment Editor

The internet has seen the rise and fall of several new media platforms. Flash animation cartoons, podcasts and blogs are the more common examples, but perhaps the most widespread and popular of these media revolutions is the web comic.

We have all read the morning newspaper and, at one time or another, turned to the funnies to amuse ourselves with the antics of "Garfield" or the hijinks of "Dilbert." The almost infectious spread of the internet has given any person with access to a computer the ability to upload comics into a international viewership. Thus the web comic was born.

Web comics have become a major force on the internet of late, whether you're aware of it or not. While most of

the readily available ones are focused around pop culture and an overall "geek" lifestyle, others revolve around much more mundane issues like being alive in today's socioeconomic environment while coexisting with your fellow man. Some of the more popular web comics include Tim Buckley's "Ctrl+Alt+Del," Scott Kurtz's "Player vs. Player," (PvP for short) and Woody Hearn's "GU comics."

Each artist started his or her comic under different pretenses, but most of them have just springboarded from entertaining their friends and family to enthraling an entire culture on the internet.

Jerry Holkins and Mike Kraulik, started a little comic named "Penny Arcade" back in 1999, when the internet had just barely gotten off the ground.

"Penny Arcade" is mainly focused around the neurosis that can grip people at times when presented with one video game or another and the foolishness of some very idiotic video games.

Almost a decade later, "Penny Arcade" has become one of the largest forces in video games on the internet, the site is updated with news and opinionated posts by the authors more than once a day in most cases. "Penny Arcade" has grown so much in fact, that several years ago it became the focal point of one of the largest benefit conventions on the west coast. Known as "PAX," the convention is a breeding ground for the new video game market and geekness in general; it also donates all of its proceeds to the Child's Play foundation, a nonprofit organization which devotes its resources to

helping underprivileged and critically sick children.

Not all web comics can claim the responsibility of being altruistic though. In most cases these, comics merely exist to entertain their internet-bound audiences.

Woody Hearn's "GU comics" was started as a page that the author used to entertain his friends that played alongside him in the MMOG (Massively Multiplayer Online Game) "Everquest" and has since become a more mainstream comic that focuses on the wacky antics within today's market of popular console and PC video games. It also picks apart the niceties of everyday life as a geek, or just as a human being (i.e. washing dishes, fighting Santa Claus and time wasted trolling the internet). The comic succeeds in digging into the meat of the current

socioeconomic stat of global politics...mostly when pertaining to video games.

One of the greatest things about web comics is their ability to make you branch out. Most people start off reading just one. I personally began with "GU comics," and from there, via comments made by the author or references within the comic itself, I started down the slippery slope of internet goodness that eventually leads to checking dozens of comics every day to see who has the earliest update.

You can find a comic that pertains to your personal interests and hobbies so instead of having them fed to you in a papery format, you can select the ones that suit your lifestyle. It's like having your own personal Living section, right there on your computer.

Apple's iPhone offers promise of greatness

TIE CARNEY
Staff Reporter

In June of 2007, Apple's new iPhone will hit stores featuring a 3.5 inch, 320X480 resolution screen as well as 4-8 GB of storage. This multifunctional device was first advertised during this year's Superbowl. It combines the features of an iPod, internet browser, camera, and cell phone all in one. The phone will be available for purchase for \$499 (4GB) or \$599 (8GB), with a two year contract, in June through Cingular Wireless.

The screen of this new device has sensors to detect when to turn it off and how you hold it. The first one is a proximity sensor. When the phone is brought up close enough to your face, it senses it needs to turn off the back light and touchpad screen. This helps the phone save its battery life. The next sensor is an accelerometer. This senses the orientation of the

phone (vertical or horizontal) and lines up the menu according to the direction in which the phone is faced. The last and final sensor is an ambient light sensor, which also controls the backlight in order to save battery power.

The next feature to the phone is the built-in iPod functionality. Like the video iPods, the phone can show movies, TV, and music. When watching a movie or TV, you can choose between full screen or wide-screen just by tapping the screen twice.

The music is organized in a slightly more convenient way. It's are organized in

phones, the iPhone displays websites, just like a computer, only smaller. This is different compared to most other phones, which usually show a more simplified version of the site, which can be confusing to try and work. The view of the page can also be displayed vertically or horizontally.

In addition to everything else, the iPhone has all the regular calling functions of the average cell phone, but with even a bit more. It allows

three-way calling, call holding, call merging and caller ID, but it also has another convenient voice mail feature, allowing you to check your messages without even calling voice mail. The phone lists your voice mails on screen without the hassle of having to call. You can browse through them all at one; no more listening to 20 old messages before hearing the one you want.

A two megapixel camera with video recording and

zoom capabilities, and a built in battery that is designed to last up to five hours of phone use and 16 hours of music time is also apart of the package

The headphones that come with the phone are much like the ones that come with the iPod, but they have a built in speaker that can answer calls by pinching it.

This phone will be available for purchase in Cingular and Apple stores, June 2007

Playlist Spotlight: Jon Ares

NATHAN FISHER
co-Editor-in-Chief

"My tastes are pretty wide-ranging, but I'm much more of an 'album' guy; I'll listen to a full album from beginning to end, rather than 'shuffling' [them all]," Jon Ares, Media Tech Assistant and Technical Director for the Theatre Department, said.

Ares appreciates the art that an entire album represents; the work that an artist puts into song choice and order or if the album tells a story. "Artists that are excellent poets (like Sting and Annie Lennox) are the ones I will listen to over and over."

Ares' home CD collection is just under 500 discs

and contains, "classical, 'old school' jazz, lots of alternative, tons of music from Broadway shows, many operas, techno, New Age, and a good amount of classic rock. One can also find Chinese hillside music, Gregorian chants, and 'novelty' recordings; some that go back 50 years or more."

alphabetical order, and displayed in much larger, easier to read font. The iPhone is capable of both Wi-Fi and EV-DO internet access. Unlike other

