

Work Station computing & high tech

INTERFACE



By Zeid Nasser

e-book market gathers pace

For the past couple of years, analysts have been predicting that the age of the electronic book (ebook) has arrived.

In reality, however, the ebook market has to develop significantly before anyone can claim the gradual death of traditional paper-based books.



Last week's announcement from Google may help things along.

Google to launch a platform for selling electronic versions of books, which can be through gadgets such as cell phones, laptops and e-book devices.

The service, called Google Editions, marks the company's first effort to earn revenue from its controversial book scanning project, which attempts to make millions of printed books available online.

The scanning program has faced complaints from authors and publishers over copyright, Google Editions will cover only books submitted and approved by the copyright holders when it launches next year.

The books bought through Google Editions will be accessible on any device that has a Web browser, putting Google in competition with Amazon.com Inc. and its Kindle e-book reader.

The e-book market is evolving to allow access of books from anywhere and from any device.

Consumers can buy directly from Google or from any number of online booksellers and other retail partners using the Google Editions platform.

Google will actually host the e-books and make them searchable. It is also expected that several languages will be catered to, including Arabic at a later stage.

Google plans to collect 55 percent of the revenue and to share a sizeable proportion with retailers and publishers. If the books are being sold directly to consumers by Google, it will take 37 percent and give publishers 63 percent. It is expected the program will start with 400,000 to 600,000 books in the first half of 2010.

Books bought through Google Editions will be stored on any device and will be readable without a live Internet connection.

Taking a look at the ebook market size so far reveals a promising but relatively tiny market. According to the Association of American Publishers, U.S. e-book sales in 2008 totaled \$113 million, up 68 percent from 2007 but still a fraction of the estimated \$24.3 billion spent on all books.

Sony also has a book store, which includes more than 100,000 books. Add to that the million free public-domain books available from Google and the 330,000 titles available at the Kindle and you can begin to see the growing trend and possibilities.

Have you read an ebook yet? Give it a try, and understand that one day we shall all be ebook readers!

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Verizon's Motorola Droid will debut next month with Android 2.0

By Ed Hardy

Verizon Wireless has begun advertising its upcoming "Droid" smartphone, giving the first official details on a model that's been the subject of many rumors. On the list of confirmed features are Android 2.0 and a November release.

The theme for this campaign will be contrasting the features the Verizon's upcoming device will offer and that the Apple iPhone does not, including a physical keyboard, multi-taking third-party apps, widgets, and a replaceable battery.

The TV ads direct people to a website—DroidDoes.com—that gives more details, including the fact that this smartphone will run Android 2.0, an as-yet unreleased version of Google's operating system. The Droid will also have a 5 megapixel camera with a flash, mobile broadband, and speech recognition capabilities.

In addition, Verizon revealed that this ad campaign is "a teaser of big things to come in November", giving a rough time frame for the debut of this device.

Although Verizon's advertising campaign only mentions the Droid, numerous rumors indicate that the complete name is Motorola Droid.

All the images of this model that have leaked out, while blurry, reveal that it will be a slider with a horizontally-oriented QWERTY keyboard.

It will supposedly have a 3.7-inch touchscreen with a resolution of 480 by 854 pixels (WVGA+).

As an Android-based phone, the Droid will have a highly-functional web browser, and include tie-ins to a number of Google's online services,



like Gmail and Google Maps. There is also a rapidly growing collection of third-party software available for this operating system.

It will supposedly use Google's standard Android user interface, not one created by Verizon. Neither will it have MotoBlur, Motorola's social-networking service that will debut on the Motorola Cliq.

According to unconfirmed reports, this smartphone will have 256 MB of RAM and will ship with a 16 GB microSD card, which can be swapped out for a larger one when available.

This Motorola model will also reportedly include a GPS receiver and a 1400 mAh battery.

Overall, it will be 4.6 inches wide, 2.3 inches tall, 0.54 inches thick, and 6.0 ounces.

Verizon

Amazon Kindle available internationally

GITEX 2009 grows 'marginally' over last year. The CEO of Dubai World Trade Centre Helal Saeed Almarri has admitted that the region's IT industry and the upcoming GITEX Technology Week has been impacted by the global economic downturn but claims it has been 'less affected' in comparison to other events in the world. "There's no industry in the world that has not been affected, regardless of whether we have growth or decline, every industry we find has changed. The way people are doing business has changed," Almarri commented to media. "...we have found that we had very little impact in comparison to other places in the world due to this crisis. Let me take that one stage further - if you look at the year 2009, overall as DWTC we can say we're pretty flat in terms of business."

While there have been shows such as last week's Cityscape that have shown a decline, Almarri added that this year's GITEX will be "marginally bigger" with more than 3,000 exhibitors from over 65 countries taking part. Last year, there were 3,300 companies from 83 countries exhibiting at the ICT



event. "The issue is not have they have been affected, the issue is they've been affected less than other places in the world," added Almarri. GITEX 2010 takes place from October 17th to 21st next year. Many of the industry's top players such as Microsoft, Aastra, Avaya, Brother, Cisco, Dell, Du,

Dubai Internet City, Etisalat and Oracle are returning to the event this year, while some new exhibitors joining in include Hitachi, Honeywell and Yahoo!

Maktoob.Trixee Loh, senior VP of exhibitions at DWTC, added that pre-registrations are up by nearly 30 - 40% over last year totalling about 15,000 to 20,000 visitors so far. Pre-registration for the event, which offers up to 25% savings on entry charges, will close on October 15th. Visitors then have the option of buying tickets at the venue when the event kicks off on Sunday, October 18th. Ticket prices remain the same as last year. Entry to the GITEX Shopper & Consumer Electronics Expo, costs just AED 20 per person (single entry). The Expo will showcase more than 25,000 products and will take place from October 17 - 24 at the Airport Expo Dubai.

Microsoft issues record number of security updates

Last week, Microsoft issued an unprecedented number of updates to fix security problems in Windows and other software. The company released patches to plug at least 34 security holes, the highest number of vulnerabilities it has ever addressed in a single month.

This massive patching effort offers something for all Windows users, fixing security issues in Windows applications from the Internet Explorer (IE) browser and Microsoft Silverlight, to Microsoft's Internet Information Services (IIS) server.

Two-thirds of security holes addressed this month earned Microsoft's "critical" rating, which is its most severe. Microsoft la-

bels a security flaw critical if it can be exploited remotely to take complete control over a Windows system, without any help from the victim.

Among the flaws patched in this month's release is a set of vulnerabilities in the file-sharing capability of Windows Vista and Windows Server 2008 systems. This issue attracted attention last month because proof-of-concept exploits that attackers might use to figure out how to attack the flaw were posted on the Web.

Microsoft also issued a patch to address a remarkable security weakness in a Microsoft compo-

Security Alert

nent responsible for handling Web site encryption certificates.

Microsoft fixed at least four IE-specific vulnerabilities, including

one for an IE flaw that was publicly disclosed prior to today. Fixes are available for all versions of Internet Explorer, including IE 6, 7 and 8.

Updates are available via Windows Update Web site, or through Automatic Updates. As always, please drop us a note in the comments section below if you experience any funky problems with your Windows system after applying these updates.