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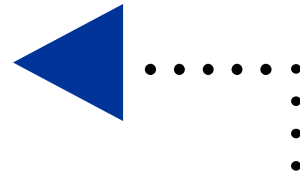
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Web Site Price-Protects Previous Purchases



OLED, Bi-Stable Displays to Challenge LCDs



Vol 7 Issue 13 July Part 1 Newsletter

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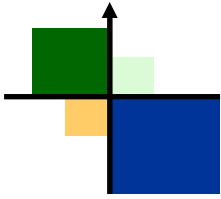
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COMPUTER TALK

Web Site Price-Protects Previous Purchases

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1895,2155432,00.asp>

Remember that plasma TV or DVD box set you bought last weekend? Guess what? It's now 20 percent off and you're out some cash. Or are you?

A Web site known as Price Protectr is looking to help consumers recoup their money when recently purchased items go on sale....

A variety of retailers such as Best Buy and Amazon have little-known policies that allow customers to collect cash when items they have previously purchased are marked down further, within a certain timeframe...

Enter Price Protectr. Visitors to the Web site sign up and enter the URL of the item they have just purchased into the Web site. If the price of that item drops within the allotted rebate time, Price Protectr will alert the consumer via e-mail. The site will also notify the consumer when that rebate period has expired, Tonella said.

When the retooled site debuts in several weeks, it will include more in-depth information on retailers, where to find them and how to recoup losses, Tonella said...

At this point, the site monitors 34 companies, including the U.S., U.K. and Canadian operations of Amazon.com, Best Buy, Circuit City, CompUSA, Radio Shack and The Sharper Image. It currently has 5,000 registered users, according to Tonella...

Sony Cuts Price on PlayStation 3 by \$100

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1895,2155867,00.asp>

Sony Corp. cut the price of the PlayStation 3 by \$100, or 17 percent, in the United States on Monday, a move that should boost the video game console's lackluster sales.

The PlayStation 3, which includes a 60-gigabyte hard drive and a Blu-ray high-definition DVD player, will now cost \$500, or \$20 more than the most expensive version of Microsoft Corp.'s Xbox 360...

...Wedbush Morgan analyst Michael Pachter said Sony's price reduction would not double sales but may boost them by 50 percent to about 120,000 units a month.

"The greater significance is that Sony is signaling to the market that we're coming down the cost curve pretty fast in making this thing. It's a pretty consumer-friendly move," Pachter said...

...The Xbox 360 and Wii have outsold the PS3 by several times in the crucial U.S. market, leaving Sony, whose Playstation 2 dominated the last console generation, in

the unfamiliar position of playing catch up...

...Sony also hopes the PS3 will win some converts following Microsoft's admission last week that the failure rate of its Xbox 360 console had been unacceptably high, forcing it to book \$1 billion in repair costs.

"We're especially proud of the fact that the PlayStation 3 has the lowest failure rate of any PlayStation product. It's absolutely the gold standard," Tretton said.

OLED, Bi-Stable Displays to Challenge LCDs

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1895,2154923,00.asp>

A new generation of super-thin, power-sipping displays is making its way to the market, stretching battery lives to new limits and perhaps one day posing a challenge to heavier, energy-gobbling LCDs.

Organic light-emitting diode (OLED) and bi-stable technologies are the most likely challengers to LCDs.

An OLED screen uses as much as 40 percent less power than a comparable LCD and could be twice as thin because it does not need backlighting.

These technologies are already being used in some smaller portable devices, such as music players from Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. and Reigncom Ltd. and a thin mobile phone from Kyocera.

And Sony Corp. plans to sell small-sized TVs using the OLED technology later this year...

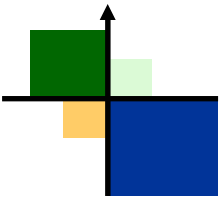
..."The price of an OLED display is 1.7 to 1.8 times higher than that of a LCD and it won't become more competitive until after the price falls sharply," CMEI President Peter Chen said.

A rival to OLED technology are bi-stable displays, which retain images without power, making them suitable for public displays and sub-screens on devices, although bi-stable displays have image quality issues.

Another product is color flexible OLED display. LG.Philips LCD recently unveiled a 4-inch full-color flexible OLED display, although the size is still too small for handheld e-books.

And that's just the beginning. One day, versions of newspapers and magazines that are updated wirelessly might be rolled up or folded, and carried like a piece of paper, for instance.

"That's when we will see real differentiation (with other display technologies)," said Chung Ho-kyoon, Samsung SDI's chief technology officer.



A BIT OF ADVICE

Change the font Windows XP displays in Windows Explorer

http://articles.techrepublic.com.com/5100-10878_11-6184922.html?tag=nl.e064

...Windows XP uses the same font for desktop icons and Windows Explorer. If the font is too hard to read, you can change its size or the font itself with a few mouse clicks. Here's how to adjust the look of your system fonts.

Access the Display Properties dialog box by right-clicking the desktop and selecting the Properties command.

Select the Appearance tab and click the Advanced button.

Select Icon from the Item drop-down list.

Use the Font drop-down arrow to select a font from the list.

Click OK twice -- once to close the Advanced Appearance dialog box and once to close the Display Properties dialog box.

You can see the new font by launching Windows Explorer or My Computer. If you don't like what you see, repeat the steps and select a different font.

Note: This tip is for both Windows XP Home and Professional.

Solid state drive storage: Good for the enterprise?

<http://blogs.techrepublic.com.com/datacenter/?p=134&tag=nl.e138>

...Today, storage costs anywhere from about 30 cents per GB for SATA drives to \$3 per GB for enterprise-grade SAS drives. Of course, this is a rough estimate that varies wildly based on drive capacity, manufacturer, RPMs, etc. For the purposes of this post, it's a close enough estimate.

Recently, however, a relatively new contender - the solid state drive (SSD) - has emerged in the storage game that could, over time, seriously shake up the storage market. Although solid state storage has been around for a while in the form of USB-powered flash drives, the technology is evolving to a point where SSDs can, in some cases, start to supplant traditional storage. However, solid state storage is very different from traditional storage in a number of ways.

Unlike their mechanical counterparts, solid state drives have no moving parts. Instead, a solid state storage device uses either volatile or non-volatile memory to achieve its storage capabilities. Units that use DRAM-based technology (volatile memory) basically have a bank of RAM installed that takes the place of a hard drive. Since data stored in DRAM cannot survive a power loss, these kinds of devices often have backup storage that can be used in the event of a power failure. Although extremely fast, this kind of storage is not adequate for general storage in the enterprise.

SSDs become acceptable in some situations in the enterprise when the disks are built using non-volatile flash memory. Although slower than DRAM-based SSDs, flash-based SSDs do

not require battery backup and provide much more reliability — mainly since the stored data can survive a power failure.

Until recently, SSDs were not cost-effective replacements for traditional hard drives. With a current approximate price tag of \$10 - \$20 per GB for SSD-based storage, it isn't going to immediately supplant magnetic hard drives for most organizations. And, in the data center, SSDs are probably a very long way off. Once the price of SSD-based storage comes down to the high end of SAS, you will likely see more manufacturers creating enterprise-grade storage arrays based on flash.

In the meantime, however, there has been significant interest in SSDs for mobile devices. Even though SSD-based storage is more expensive, with lower power consumption, lower levels of heat, and similar (if not better) performance, putting SSDs into a laptop or other mobile device makes a lot of sense.

Solid state drive disadvantages

Besides the price, SSDs do have some disadvantages when compared with traditional magnetic media, although some of these downsides have been mitigated.

First, flash-based storage device blocks (each flash device is broken into blocks) have a limited number of write cycles before they wear out. Older flash controllers did not do a good job managing the location of written files, so some blocks of the flash device might be used over and over while other blocks remain completely untouched for the life of the device, thus limiting the device's potential lifespan. Newer controllers do a much better job of managing write locations so as to maximize the life of the disk. In fact, with the optimal write method and usage pattern, a flash device can even outlive a magnetic disk.

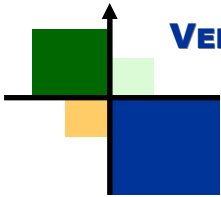
Second, SSD capacity remains much lower than that provided by magnetic media and will for some time. Although there are 160GB SSDs out there, compare that to the recent announcement of 1TB magnetic hard drives. When it comes to raw storage, magnetic media can't be touched yet.

Another major downside to flash-based devices is the difficulty of data recovery. Often, when a flash drive fails, it's done. End of story...Although information can sometimes be recovered from a flash device, it's much harder and much less of a certainty.

Finally, although solid state drives shine when used with random I/O, they do not do as well as magnetic media when it comes to sequential I/O.

Summary

For the enterprise, SSDs will be limited to portable devices and low capacity requirements until two things happen: (1) The price per GB drops significantly, and (2) the device capacity increases significantly. Once those two things happen, the fight will be on.



SHUTDOWN

Glass of milk

<http://www.kissmyfloppy.com/pages/jokes.php?id=49&cat=all>

Somebody left a glass of milk next to the keyboard. Reaction?

- **Optimist:** The glass is half full.
- **Pessimist:** The glass is half empty.
- **Futurist:** The milk's in the wrong half of the glass.
- **Pascal programmers:** Well, what type of milk is it?
- **C Programmers:** No thanks; I drink straight from the jug.
- **Assembly programmers:** No thanks; I drink straight from the cow.
- **Basic programmers:** No thanks; I'm still breast feeding.
- **Fuzzy logic guys:** I may or may not have drunk some part of that milk.
- **Prolog programmers:** I know I drank it - just don't ask me how.
- **Non-procedural language programmers:** I drank it when nobody was looking.
- **UI designers:** What's that crap in my glass?
- **Pentium users:** I drank Glass * .49999999 . . . but don't hold me to that.
- **Windows users:** Where's my straw?
- **Mac users:** Where's my pump?
- **UNIX users:** Nahh . . . too easy.
- **Multimedia author:** [slurp!]
- **Shareware game author:** That glass is free; the next one you have to pay for.
- **Security consultant:** Where'd the rest of the milk go?
- **CIA:** What makes you think that's milk?
- **NSA:** We know what it really is.
- **Copy protection crazies:** Somebody drank half my milk and didn't pay for it!
- **Free Software Foundation:** That milk is the cow's contribution to all mankind.
- **Bill Gates:** Not enough market share to be icrosoft Milk.
- **Apple Computer:** You guys really oughta be drinking Perrier.
- **IBM:** Rent the glass from us and we'll fill it with something we know is good for you.
- **IRS:** Thanks for getting your milk withholding correct this year.