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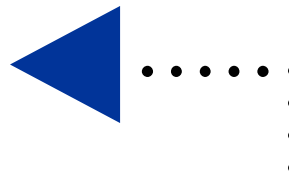
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Blog post states, “Black Google Would Save 750 Megawatt-hours a Year”, Blackle is born

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Change icons for Windows 2000 Professional desktop objects and documents

VCI News

Vermont Computing Inc. would like to welcome our newest technician, Neshobee Neill. Neshobee discovered us through the employment website monster.com.

Neshobee, a VT native, grew up in the Montpelier area. After graduating from Community College of Vermont, he's worked at IBM in Essex and in retail. Now, Neshobee finds himself a part of the VCI team. When asked what he does here, Neshobee replies "A little of everything".

I had to ask Neshobee about his unique name. "I was the youngest in my family and my sisters were in their teens by the time I was born. They were allowed to name me, and they thought Native Americans were cool at the time, so I got a Native American name." Neshobee's middle name is "Dee", yielding the initials NDN (en-de-en, try saying it out loud).

Neshobee currently lives in Brookfield with his wife Cassie and their 5 children.



Sherri's Website Highlight



This issue's Website Highlight comes from our office manager Sherri, who wants to let everyone know about an interesting blog article that has sparked a minor phenomenon. The blog post entitled "Black Google Would Save 750 Megawatt-hours a Year" has sparked environmental awareness, controversy, and a host of Google look-alikes in the color black, including a site called "Blackle".

Ecolron has this to say about how it all began:

"In January 2007, Mark Ontkush, the owner of the ecolron blog, suggested that a large amount of energy could be saved if Google switched their home page from white to black. The initial savings was estimated to be 3000 Megawatt-hours a year; this was later rounded down to 750 Megawatt-hours, after an error in the calculations was found...Tony Heap, the owner of HeapMedia, started the Blackle site shortly after these events."

Mark Ontkush goes on to explain further the research behind the claims:

"...any given CRT monitor requires more power to display a light screen than a dark one...The amount of energy saved from switching from white to black varies considerably on the size of the monitor. In a 2002 study, Roberson found that between 4 and 30W could be saved by switching from a white to a black screen. This translates into an 18 to 88% power savings per monitor. The US Department of Energy produced similar results."

"LCD display technology is different from CRT technology, and the possibility exists that colors that are energy efficient to display on a CRT monitor (e.g. black) may not be as energy efficient to display on an LCD monitor. The Roberson study found that LCD monitors saved up to 3W by switching from a white to a black screen."

So it seems that visiting a site such as Blackle, or setting it to your homepage, rather than Google could add up to some measurable power savings. However, there are some criticisms of the

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Blackle alternative.

"Since it is not owned by Google Inc., the Blackle site lacks many of the features of conventional Google, including the 'Cached' and 'Similar Pages' options, and it does not have as many of the corresponding links that can be found on the Google homepage...Moreover, the search results returned by Blackle are skewed to return environment-related results. This skew can be seen clearly when comparing search results returned by Google and Blackle. The search "Apple", for example, lists a page titled "Apple - Environment" in Blackle, but not in Google." (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackle.com>)

"In particular, the Blackle site has been heavily criticized, as it is probable that they are generating an substantial AdSense revenue stream from implementing the concept."

(<http://ecoiron.blogspot.com/2007/08/history-in-january-2007-mark-ontkush.html>)

Blackle is not the only alternative out there. A host of sites have sprung up in the wake of the article including Darkoogle, Earthle, GreenerGle, Greygle, Google Black, Jabago, Ninja, Power Google, Searchincolor.com, and Trek Black.

There are other things you can do aside from visiting these sites which can reduce monitor power consumption including changing your desktop background to a darker one, changing the color sceme on your website or blog, and creating custom color settings in your web browser for visiting sites (such as the original Google). Here's how:

Firefox

Users of the Firefox web browser can install a GreaseMonkey script called Google Dark which will automatically reverse their color scheme when visiting the authentic Google site. For a more generic approach, one can go to 'Tools > Options > Content > Fonts & Colours > Colours' in Firefox and change the default color background and text to any desired color; users who implement this option should uncheck the box that says "Allow pages to choose their own colors, instead of my selections above".

Internet Explorer

In Internet Explorer, go to 'Tools > Internet Options > General > Appearance > Colors' to alter your personal color scheme. You will also need to go to 'Tools > Internet Options > General > Appearance > Accessibility' to override the default color options on the pages that you visit. (<http://ecoiron.blogspot.com/2007/08/history-in-january-2007-mark-ontkush.html>)

Headlines

Amazon's MP3 store brings more DRM-free music at lower prices than iTunes Store

<http://arstechnica.com/news.ars/post/20070925-amazon-launches-public-beta-of-mp3-music-store.html>

Amazon has launched a public beta of its long-anticipated digital music download store, offering more than 2 million songs as MP3 files...

Most tracks are variable bit rate 256kbps MP3 files, though the occasional track is encoded at constant bit rates. Large, high-quality album art comes embedded in each file.

The default song price is \$0.99 per track, but the top 100 songs are only \$0.89 apiece, and the top 100 albums go for \$8.99. That's a pretty decent deal, but it makes you wonder how Amazon thinks it is going to sell Wilson Phillips' Greatest Hits for \$11.99.

Individual tracks can be downloaded directly to the hard drive, but full album purchases have to use Amazon's download application...Song previews begin playing almost instantly, and checkout was a breeze when we tried it.

There are a few restrictions. One of the biggest is that there's no re-downloading of tracks; you'd better make a backup, because if you lose a song, you'll have to purchase it again to get another copy...

But now that the major stores are shedding DRM, they face increased competition from one another in that part of their business. Amazon's 256kbps tracks are \$0.89 or \$0.99 each, which compares quite well with Wal-Mart's \$0.94 per track price for music at the same bit rate. iTunes continues to sell 256kbps AAC files without DRM for \$1.29, but this is only available with EMI tracks at the moment.

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Chinese Worm Creator Gets High-Paying Job Offer In Prison

<http://it.slashdot.org/it/07/09/25/1155251.shtml>

"The recently imprisoned creator of China's worst computer virus ever (worm.whboy) has now been offered a job paying millions of yuan from his prison cell. He's actually been offered several, and one of the companies that has offered him the position of Technology Director was actually affected by his virus. The General Manager there now believes the virus writer may have just been 'led astray'. The media is reporting that author Li Jun originally wrote the virus due to frustrations over being jobless. 'So far, about 10 network companies across the country have offered jobs to Li, whom they regarded was a "precious genius," the report said citing Li's lawyer Wang Wanxiong. Li's cyber bug, which earned him about 145,000 yuan after selling it to other hackers from December 2006 to February this year, can prevent infected computers from operating anti-virus software and all programs using the "exe" suffix."

Germes Taken Into Space May Come Back Deadlier

<http://science.slashdot.org/science/07/09/25/1140253.shtml>

"Sounds like the plot for a B-movie, doesn't it? Germes go into space and come back stronger and deadlier than ever. Except, it really happened. In a medical experiment, salmonella carried about the space shuttle in

the fall of 2006 proved far more lethal to lab mice than their earth-bound source. 90% dead vs. 60% dead in twenty-six days, with half the mice dying at 1/3 the oral dose. Apparently 167 genes in the space-evolved strain had changed. The likely cause: In microgravity the force of fluids passing over the cells is low, similar to conditions in the gastrointestinal tract, and the cells adapted quickly to the new environment."

The Canadian Taxman Goes Browsing on eBay

<http://politics.slashdot.org/politics/07/09/27/1413212.shtml>

"A story in the Globe And Mail points out that the Canada Revenue Agency is now trolling eBay Canada for high volume sellers — looking to make sure eBay's biggest users are accurately reporting their income. They've successfully gotten a court order for the names, addresses, and other personal information for that website's biggest users. 'Canadians spend about \$5-billion online each year and eBay is by far the largest electronic marketplace, accounting for about a quarter of the total sales. The site was visited by nearly 11 million Canadians in August, according to company figures. The CRA said in court filings that it is targeting people who qualified for eBay's PowerSeller program in 2004 and 2005. Only top eBay sellers can qualify for the program, which provides benefits to members. Those benefits include prioritized customer service, special promotions and sales tips."

Tech Tips

Change icons for Windows 2000 Professional desktop objects and documents

<http://blogs.techrepublic.com.com/window-on-windows/?p=491&tag=nl.e030>

You can change the icon used for a Windows 2000 Professional shortcut by right-clicking the shortcut, choosing Properties, and then clicking Change Icon. You can browse for the file or specify the path to the file containing the icon (.ico, .dll, or .exe files).

Desktop objects like My Computer behave differently, however. You can change the icons for these objects through the Display Properties sheet. To do so, follow these steps:

Right-click the desktop and choose Properties.

Click the Effects tab.

In the Desktop Icons group, select the object whose icon you want to change.

Click either Change Icon to assign a different icon or Default Icon to return to its default.

You can also change the icons used to display a specific type of file, although the change takes a little more effort than changing desktop object icons.

Here's how:

Open any folder and choose Tools | Folder Options.

Click the File Types tab, and locate and select the file extension for the file type whose icon you want to change.

Click Change Icon and select the file and icon you want to use.

Whether you're changing icons for desktop objects or documents, you'll find several to choose from in the files Shell32.dll and Moricons.dll, both located in the %systemroot%\System32 folder.