

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"The Arc command? Guy in the next cubicle seems to know a lot about that."

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Too much hype over the new iPhone

It never ceases to amaze that so many are so easily swayed by carefully crafted hype over a new product, especially when it doesn't offer much that is new.

iPhone, at base, is a cell phone that takes pictures, offers voice e-mail and plays music. We already have all that stuff so is it worth paying 10 times as much to get it in a different package with a touch screen?

Granted, iPhone is pretty slick. David Cate over at Times New Media gave me a look at his and I enjoyed playing with it. The screen's wonderful, the touch screen aspect amazes and in terms of operating system design, it couldn't get any better.

It just costs too much — around \$750 to get in business with the 8GB model.

I use a Motorola Razr which I got for \$50 after the Motorola off and only because it fits in my pocket — I disliked hanging a cell phone on my hip. It takes pictures but my digital camera does a much better job. It connects to the Internet but I have no desire to read e-mail away from my desktop computer.

It doesn't download and play music but if it did, I wouldn't use that feature either. I'm not one of those folks who has to be constantly entertained by external noise.

iPhone's Web download speed seems on par with a dial-up modem. Replacing the battery is not something you do — it's hardwired. Apple says it will replace the battery if it drops below 50 percent of original capacity but if it craps out altogether, iPhone owners must send the phone back to Apple — along with \$85.95.

And if you charge the device every night, you may need a battery replacement within a year since the phone will only handle 300 to 400 recharges. Nor will iPhone connect to your 64-bit Windows system under Vista or XP. And battery replacement means all data stored on the phone is lost.

The phone costs \$500 for the 4GB model and \$600 for 8GB but you can't just buy it and switch your Verizon service. You have to sign a new contract with only one provider, AT&T, at a per-month cost that starts at \$60 (plus \$35 setup fee). To cancel your current service will cost you a termination penalty which could be



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hefty if you're just starting on a new contract.

You can remove the iPhone's SIM card by inserting a paper clip into a tiny hole in the top of the device but if you replace it with a SIM card from another carrier, the phone won't work. As well, you can't use the phone's non-connected features such as playing music or stored videos unless you buy the AT&T subscrip-

tion. And on launch, the iPhone's Safari browser doesn't include plug-ins for Adobe Flash, which many Web sites use. iPhone has Bluetooth built in, but it doesn't allow transfer of data from your computer.

We already have the services iPhone offers on much cheaper phones, under much cheaper plans.

For e-mail, Google CallWave — a free service — and for voice e-mail, check out GotVoice which converts your e-mail to MP3 files and sends them to your phone.

For music, there's PocketTunes which costs \$38 and allows downloads from Yahoo Music Engine, Napster To Go, and Rhapsody To Go, among others, and also provides Internet radio.

Want live TV? Try MobiTV for Java-enabled phones. Don't have enough memory to store songs on your phone? Take a look at Mercora's M music play which allows you to store songs on your PC but access them remotely for \$5 a month.

iPhone offers Google maps, but so does Google — you can get a mobile version for any Web-enabled phone.

iPhone's an interesting device and its larger and touch-enabled screen sets a mark for future technology. And if you can afford it, all well and good. If Apple wants to give me one — and pay the monthly cost to use it for two years — I won't turn it down.

But I won't be buying any anytime soon. Meanwhile, hackers already have cracked

the phone's activation process whereby a signal is sent from the phone to Apple, which authenticates the phone and turns it on. And they promise to "unlock" the phone within a week, which would allow it to be used with service providers other than AT&T.

Make Your Map: Google now provides ability to measure and plot a directional driving map of your choice to any destination.

At maps.google.com, click on "Get directions" and type in a starting and ending point, and Google displays a preferred route, including detailed information on what turns to make at what point in your journey.

But you may now click on the highlighted map route and drag and drop it. As you do so, Google modifies the driving directions, including the total distance in miles.

This is especially convenient if you wish to modify the suggested route to include side trips. And it costs nothing.

Dental Technology: My dentist, Dr. Phil Smith (he caters to cowards, of which I am one) just left a practice downtown to set up his own shop in Colonial Heights, which introduced me to the latest in dental technology, including a device similar to what optometrists use where you plant your chin. It quickly produces an X-ray of your entire jaw without the necessity of having film stuck in your mouth.

The chairs are more comfortable, the light doesn't blind you, and each of the stalls has its own wide-screen, high definition TV — and you can ask for the remote control.

Everything's digital. The dental technician has a computer display next to the technician, the result of the X-ray and your dental history, and that information can also be displayed on the TV screen. And she can set your next appointment without having to stop at the receptionist's desk.

My only complaint was that the new chairs don't have back vibrators — or maybe they do and I just didn't ask.

Ted Como is managing editor of the Kingsport Times-News. You may e-mail him at tc2010@timesnews.net.

Business Calendar

Continued from page 1D will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. Tuesday, July 24, at the Holston Business Development Center in Kingsport. The class is free, but registration is required. To register, call Debbie Marsh at the Holston Business Development Center at (423) 578-6235.

TSBDC offering training opportunities

JOHNSON CITY — The Tennessee Small Business Development Center at East Tennessee State University is offering several training opportunities in July for small businesses. "So You Want to Start a Business" is a three-hour class designed to address many of the questions that potential entrepreneurs have in the initial research stages of getting their business started. Part of the class is aimed at what it takes to be a successful business owner; part of the class is aimed at the business idea itself. Participants will examine the lifestyle changes and leadership challenges that many business owners face. The loan process and sources of funding will also be discussed. The class will be taught from 6 to 9 p.m. July 10 at the Holston Business Development Center in Kingsport; from 1 to 4 p.m. July 11 at the Greene County Partnership in Greeneville; and from 6 to 9 p.m. on July 10 and 1 to 4 July 30 in Johnson City. "Writing Your Business Plan" is the next course in the series. It's also three hours and gets participants started on the key components of every business plan, including the business description, management plan, marketing plan and financial plan. The class will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. July 19 in Johnson City. The fee is \$10. A relatively new course in the series is "Common Sense Marketing." This three-hour session will help participants define their target markets, teach them basic components of marketing, and examine marketing strategies that work and don't work for small businesses. The class will be offered from 1 to 4 p.m. July 17 in Johnson City. "Leading, Learning, and Inspiring with Stories" featuring guest storyteller Molly Catron from Greene County will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. July 24 at the Holston Business Development Center in Kingsport. The class will help participants learn how to deliver a compelling message. "Fundamentals of Finance" will be taught by TSBDC Director Bob Justice. It addresses the loan process and how to get financing. The class will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. July 12 in Johnson City. The fee is \$20. Registration is required for all classes. To register for classes in Kingsport, contact Debbie Marsh at debbie.marsh@hbdc.org or (423) 578-6235. For all other classes, register by contacting Teresa Blair of the Tennessee Small Business Development Center at blairt@mail.tsbdc.org or (423) 439-8505. Unless otherwise stated, training will be held at the ETSU Innovation Laboratory at 2109 W. Market St. in Johnson City.

Milligan College holds information session

MILLIGAN COLLEGE — The Admissions Office at Milligan College will host an information open house for its graduate and adult programs from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, July 12, in Derthick Hall. Faculty and staff will be on hand to discuss degree completion programs for adults in business administration and early childhood development, as well as graduate programs in business, education and occupational therapy. The general information session will allow visitors to speak with faculty members and receive information on a variety of topics, such as academic coursework and financial aid. For more information, contact the Office of Lifelong Learning at (423) 461-8782 or adep@milligan.edu.

Northeast State offers writing course

BLOUNTVILLE — The Institute for Business and Industry Training at Northeast State Technical Community College is offering a three-credit hour course in technical writing beginning the second week of July. This in-depth class gives participants the ability to compose proposals, reports, material for technical and scientific manuals, and documented reports. The class will meet from 1:10 to 3:10 p.m., Monday through Thursday from July 9 to Aug. 9 at the Regional Center for Applied Technology, 222 W. Main St., in downtown Kingsport. The deadline to register is July 9. For more information or to register, contact Cindy Tauscher at (423) 354-2570 or cmtauscher@northeaststate.edu.

Northeast State to host certified mechanical inspector course

BLOUNTVILLE — Northeast State Technical Community College will hold the American Society for Quality's Certified Mechanical Inspector (CMI) certification review course from 6 to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays from July 24 through Sept. 25. The course consists of 30 hours of classroom instruction around the topics that constitute the body of knowledge for this exam. Topics include technical mathematics, blueprint analysis, materials and processes, inspection tools and equipment, inspection planning, inspection technology, statistics, and sampling and sampling plans. The review course is designed to aid those persons preparing to take the CMI examination. The 10-week course is being offered in collaboration with the Northeast Tennessee Section of the American Society for Quality. Course facilitator is Jerry Eberhart, a quality professional with more than 30 years of manufacturing experience. Registrations will be accepted through July 10. For more information, contact the Office of Community Education at (423) 323-0222 or rpdugger@northeaststate.edu.

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