

IT News: BlackBerry Addiction Is the Latest Craze in Litigation

by Gladys Rama
October 9, 2006

Giving employees the option to telecommute isn't necessarily a bad thing, but doling out wireless devices like the BlackBerry to keep them in touch with the office might be invitation for a lawsuit, warn attorneys at the Epstein Becker & Green law firm. They say that the findings of a recent Rutgers University study suggest that company-provided wireless communication devices can spur employers to work during unpaid after-hours, making them susceptible to stress-related illnesses, carpal tunnel syndrome and even "BlackBerry addiction" -- all of which a company can be held liable for. (<http://www.ebglaw.com>)

Survey Says PC Is Best in Show

Four hundred business professionals have spoken: The PC is the "breakthrough product of the past 20 years." A survey conducted by Office Depot to mark the retail chain's 20th anniversary also crowned wireless computing as the "most groundbreaking item" to hit the market since 2000, the evolution of the Internet as the "most innovative service" to come out of the '90s and Microsoft Office as the "most innovative product" to be released in the '80s. (<http://www.officedepot.com>)

New Products: Data Analysis, Chart-Rendering, More

New on the market this week is Mathematica Link for Excel 3, Wolfram Research's solution to a problem facing many data analysts: how to fuse Mathematica's programming and computing capabilities with Excel's interface. Retailing at \$249, Mathematica Link for Excel lets users work in both applications simultaneously, thanks to a bidirectional link that integrates Mathematica's functions with Excel's spreadsheet environment. A new feature lets you convert Mathematica codes into Excel macros with just one click. (<http://www.wolfram.com/mlx>)

The Microsoft .NET Framework gets a new toy with the latest version of NETChart, DataArt's chart-rendering software tailored for Microsoft Visual Studio .NET. There are improvements all around, from better data presentation quality and label support to a wider variety of chart types. NETChart works for Microsoft .NET 1.0 and 2.0 and integrates with both ASP.NET and WinForms.NET. <http://www.dataart.com/netchart>

For the low, low price of free, you can now get the new beta version of VMware Converter 3 before its expected general release in early 2007. By combining two existing VMware conversion products, Converter 3 is capable of both physical-to-virtual and virtual-to-virtual conversions, and a new "zero-downtime conversion" feature lets a P2V conversion take place without interrupting the source machine's operations. An enterprise edition is also available free of charge for those with current contracts for VirtualCenter Management Server. (<http://www.vmware.com/converterbeta>)

VMware's Infrastructure 3 is also getting a face-lift with two product upgrades now available for download: VMware ESX Server 3.0.1 and VMware VirtualCenter 2.0.1, both of which support 64-bit operating systems. This latest version of VMware Infrastructure 3 promises an expanded hardware support and, by the end of this month, localization for German and Japanese. (<http://www.vmware.com/products/vi>)

If you're another IT administrator who's tired of keeping a constant eagle eye on your company's e-mail storage allocation, you might want to check out AppRiver's improved Microsoft Exchange Hosting service, which now features unlimited mailbox storage. For \$12.95 a month for each mailbox, the new storage model includes AppRiver's virus protection software, SecureTide. (<http://www.appriver.com/exchange/mailbox.asp>)

Borland tackles software quality with its new Lifecycle Quality Management Solution, a multi-tiered approach meant to target and eliminate as many glitches as possible during the software delivery lifecycle. It includes defect-prevention software Gauntlet and the Borland SilkCentral Test Manager, which can integrate with Borland's CaliberRM and Caliber DefineIT. Borland's LQM solution is available now, with one caveat: Gauntlet is available only as an early-access release, but it should become available by the end of this year.