2008 mid-year link clearance

devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20080630-01

Raymond Chen

Time for the semi-annual link clearance.

- Lucy Kellaway campaigns against management jargon. Last November, she railed against a phrase I too had ridiculed: *going forward*.
- Scott Adams blogs about going forward. I found it fascinating that of the four ways he thought blogging would be rewarding, only the last one held true. And I can definitely feel for the predicament that every blog post reduced his income.
- So you're ordering something from Amazon and you're just a smidge short of the $25 necessary to get free shipping. You could either fork over the $8 for shipping or use the Amazon Filler Item Finder to find something (like say a pack of batteries for 87 cents) that will get you free shipping.
- So you're bidding on an item on eBay and the seller has a 99.5% feedback rating (which by some people's reckoning is "barely acceptable"), and you want to see what those five negative comments were, because if they were just weenie complaints, then you'll bid on the item. Since it's hard to find those negative feedback items via eBay's interface, you can turn to the eBay negative/neutral feedback finder.
- The forensics of trying to reunite a digital camera with its owner based solely on the photos found inside it.
- The *New York Times* finds uncomfortably high mercury levels in tuna from several New York sushi restaurants. The response from Japan: Meh.
- It opened during the cold part of the year, but now that the weather is nice, you can visit the new Fremont Peak Park. And while you're there, stop by some restaurants I like, such as *The Asteroid* and *Blue C Sushi* (powered by RFID[1]), because sushi tastes better when it's moving on a conveyer belt.
- atlarge.com tracks free WiFi access points at airports around the world.
- A dead-on parody of Microsoft PR-speak.
- YouTube is cruel.
- The Ballmer Peak.
- Joel Spolsky explains why the Microsoft Office file formats are so complicated.
- Benjamin Supnik explains why the default answer to any rendering setting is "all the way up."

- Music for 18 (Cornfed) Musicians: A group of musicians at a comparatively unknown Midwestern college undertake the landmark work.
- Improv Everywhere strikes again: Standing frozen in time in Grand Central Station. (Earlier coverage of their antics.) Their efforts inspired similar events around the world. Even Taco Bell got into the act.
- Ken Levine explains why he doesn't film in front a live audience on Friday nights and what you do with your weakest episode of the season.
- Earl Pomerantz wrote for many hit television shows from years past, and his storytelling skills are still top notch. He can take the simple task of changing a light bulb into an enjoyable diversion, manufacture a radio interview with a giraffe (best line: "No, the ice cream truck is coming."), or reminisce about working with (or perhaps against) Tony Clifton.
- If you get your television signal the old fashioned way, then starting in February 2009, you may need a converter box in order to watch television. You can apply for a $40 coupon online, while supplies last. (The coupon expires in 90 days, and many people can't find a store that stocks converters in time.) The Washington Post explains.
- David Pogue teaches how to disable the email-to-SMS feature on your mobile phone.
- Those crazy Germans have struck again: They've invented PowerPoint Karaoke. (Coverage in English.)
- The *Annals of Improbable Research* is now available online in its entirety.
- When geeks have children, they have to be geek parents. Geek Dad plays paleontologist and reconstructs a chicken from bones.
- My rich neighbors are broke. Those rich neighbors of yours? Maybe they're not.
- You can't ignore compatibility just because it's a Web feature. When there's a conflict between Google Maps Windows Mobile and Windows Live Search Mobile, Windows Live voluntarily takes the back seat.

And, as always, the obligatory plug for my column in TechNet Magazine:

- Remind Me Never to Do That Again.
- Scrapping the Scraps.
- How Betas Became RCs.
- Share and Share Alike.
- 16-bit Icons Are So Passé. The title (and blurb) play a bit loose with terminology for the sake of brevity. The 16-bitness refers to the bitness of the module to which the icon is attached, not to the icon color depth. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.
- The Two Worst PCs Ever. This article was teased as "Raymond Chen fondly reminisces about working with the two worst computers ever made." This is a lie. The reminiscence is not fond.

Footnotes

[1]Yes, it isn't literally powered by RFID. I was spoofing marketing-speak. I apologize to those for whom this did not require explaining.

Raymond Chen

Follow