Archive
from the January 10, 2000 edition

What the Web holds for 2000

James Turner

We're already 10 days into the new year, but I didn't want to bother writing a look-ahead column that would not have run if civilization fell. Now that things are Y2-OK, accept my apologies - and this list of likely developments for 2000:

*Expect to see pure online retailers like amazon.com yield some ground to "bricks-and-mortar" companies like Wal-Mart. The junction of online ordering and delivery from a nearby store will be the hot e-commerce area of the year.

*More solutions, I hope, will be found to the ever-increasing volume of "spam" junk mail flowing into our e-mail in boxes. No, I don't want to make $5,000 a week, or reduce fat without exercise, thank you very much. (Well, I wouldn't mind making $5,000 a week, but I doubt that involves sending $20 to a Post Office box in Indiana....)

*This should be the year state and federal governments and international bodies wake up and begin imposing every type of legislative restriction on the Internet you can imagine.

From sales tax to intellectual-property rights, there are a lot of gray areas to sort out legally, and there are now enough people and businesses online to make regulators take notice.

*Privacy will be a major buzzword this year. Consumers are just waking up to the fact that their online sessions are scrutinized as closely by retailers as Osama bin Laden's travel plans are by the CIA. Expect some combination of technological fixes and new legislation to address it.

*Watch (and hope) for a movement to retire the word "cyberspace." I'll lead it. When you pick up the phone, you don't enter telespace. You don't enter postspace when you mail a letter. It's called using the Internet. Let's retire the prefix "e-" too.

*As DSL lines and cable modems spread across the countryside, look for rich multimedia content to become more and more prevalent.

By the end of the year, the 56K modem may join the 8-inch floppy and the 8-track tape on the junk pile of technological innovation.

*James Turner is a computer consultant and avid Web user.

LINKS OF INTEREST
Chinese toy recalls show need for stringent quality control

MOST VIEWED
1. Obama wins over a Montana crowd on healthcare

Crisis summit aims to save Iraq's Maliki

South African AIDS activists criticize firing of Madlala-Routledge

Hizbullah marks Lebanon war anniversary with pomp and piety

Democrats gain among US voters, but support is soft

Like the look of a traditional newspaper? Try the Monitor's Treeless Edition

2. The war on drugs needs a timeout

3. Truck bomb signals trouble on Russia's southern flank

4. Oops, he did it again: Jamaica's Usain Bolt sets new world record

5. Firefighters make progress against Santa Cruz fire

6. Riot shows difficulty of desegregating California prisons

7. As a CIA spy, I saw in Iran what the West cannot ignore

8. Review: 'District 9'

9. Obama's health ideas elicit support, skepticism in Colorado

10. Ahmadinejad blames West for fomenting Iran unrest