

MY TECH IN

6 SECONDS

ORWELL TOMES ERASED FROM KINDLE

AMAZON fended off accusations of Big Brother-like behaviour online and from angry customers last week after it quietly erased two George Orwell books from customers' electronic book readers.

Last Friday, customers said copies of the British author's *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* were mysteriously wiped from their Kindle devices. The online retailer later told CNET that the books were uploaded by a publisher which did not have reproduction rights and, so, were deleted.

— AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

YAHOO RALLIES ON MICROSOFT DEAL

YAHOO shares rose 4 per cent last Friday amid speculation that it will team up with Microsoft in an online-search advertising partnership aimed at mounting a more serious challenge to Google Inc.

Yahoo and Microsoft had been meeting in the Silicon Valley last week and could sign a deal as early as next week, according to AllThingsD, a technology blog, citing unnamed people at both companies.

— ASSOCIATED PRESS

PALM'S MOJO SDK FOR WEBS OUT

LAST Thursday, Palm announced the public release of its Mojo SDK to all developers interested in creating apps for its WebOS.

It also launched a new developer portal, complete with FAQs, forums, and all the associated documentation for the SDK, CNET reported.

UBISOFT LAUNCHES GAME ON FACEBOOK

FRENCH video-game star Ubisoft last Friday made its debut on the online social scene by unveiling a gaming portal on Facebook.

UbiFriends portal came to life with a TickTock game that playfully challenges Facebook users to show how much they know about their friends.

— AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

TECHNOLOGY

Telescope in eye helps the aged see

NEW YORK

A TINY glass telescope, the size of a pea, has been successfully implanted in the eyes of people with severely-damaged retinas, helping them to read, watch television and see faces.

The device is for people with an irreversible, advanced form of macular degeneration in which a blind spot develops in the central vision of both eyes.

In a brief, outpatient procedure, a corneal specialist implants the mini-telescope in one eye in place of its natural lens.

The telescope magnifies images on the retina, extending them so they fall on healthy cells outside the damaged macula, said Mr Allen Hill, chief executive of VisionCare Ophthalmic Technologies – the implant's maker – in Saratoga, California.

In March, an advisory panel to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) unanimously recommended approval of the device. VisionCare said it expects

the FDA to give its okay this year.

The device has already been approved for use in Europe.

The implanted telescope holds much promise for patients, typically the elderly, who suffer from end-stage, age-related macular degeneration, said Dr Janet Szyk, a member of the advisory panel.

The device does not cure the disease, but it does improve visual acuity, she said.

For example, a person who might usually see a blur when looking at a friend's face might,

with the help of the magnified image, see a blur only in the area of the person's nose or mouth.

— THE NEW YORK TIMES

HELPDESK 我的字典

Telescope: 望远镜
wàng yuǎn jìng

Retinas: 视网膜 shì wǎng mó

Magnifies: 放大 fàng dà

Degeneration: 衰退 (的状况)
shuāi tuì (de zhuàng kuàng)

Walkman beats iPod on music



Sony Walkman X1000 series

AMONG the hordes of media players hitting the market almost every other week, the Sony Walkman X1000 stands out with its 3-inch OLED (Organic Light Emitting Diode) screen that displays content at 10,000:1 contrast ratio and navigates by touch.

This Walkman has WiFi connectivity to enable streaming of YouTube videos and podcast downloads. Web surfing is also possible with the NetFront

browser for Walkman. And there is a long list of other functionalities which include FM.

As a music player, this Walkman works very well. Unlike the iPod which uses iTunes, track download is a simple case

of drag and drop, minus all kinds of restrictions. Playback control and sound settings are, in many ways, superior to those on the iPod.

Sound quality is good and noise cancellation is available. However, this feature works only with the supplied Sony earphones which, unfortunately, do not deliver better sound than a good pair of headphones can offer.

Although MP4 and WMV files are said to be playable, it does not mean that all variations will work on this player. I would not use this Walkman as a video player because of the limited number of video codecs supported. Also, the screen size is not really suitable for watching videos.

But, as a music player, it is as good as, if not better than, the iPod.

How much: NWX-X1050 (16GB) – \$529; NWX-X1060 (32GB) – \$699



Get up close with your treasures with this tiny gem

Veho Discovery Series USB microscope

MICROSCOPES used to be bulky and costly contraptions. Not so the Veho device, which uses increasingly sophisticated video and camera technology to bring close-up images to the computer screen.

The Veho device has a 2-megapixel image sensor and magnification of 20x-400x. The light source is 4x white-light LEDs and it connects to a PC via USB.

Apart from being an object of interest and curiosity, what are the microscope's possible applications? It is most useful for close-up inspection of items like jewellery, watches, coins and notes.

It can also be used as a presentation and reading aid. This USB microscope has a tiny footprint (120mm by 33mm) and works for both PCs and Macs.

How much: \$160

Simple and affordable storage solution

eGear Ripple Sata external hard disk casing



GIVEN the flood of information in our lives and increasing file sizes of photo and video data, more people are using external hard disks for backup and additional storage.

USB-powered 2.5-inch external hard drives are favoured for their small size and convenience (no AC power required). And prices have also been falling.

When one buys an external casing and insert a hard drive,

the storage configuration becomes even cheaper. Does it matter if this has no branding? Not really as the branded storage device is probably using the same type of hard drive

eGear's Ripple Sata enclosure is a simple and very affordable (\$20) solution. All one needs to do is to buy a Sata drive (which is getting cheaper

by the day) and pop it into the enclosure which has a small PCB interface.

Close the casing, put in the screws (a small screwdriver is provided), format the drive and it is ready for use. The Ripple enclosure also comes with a carrying case and USB cable.

How much: \$20