

t@p online Canada:

New web site doesn't live up to its hype

BY SOPHIA MAXWELL

Marketsource Corporation's new Canadian version of its US-based t@p online web site has left me unimpressed.

The site was described by the company as "an Internet mega site dedicated to college and university students in Canada...with cutting edge content and edgy style."

The site, launched on November 7, follows the same format as the US-based t@p online that receives over 12 million hits a month, 250,000 of which are from Canadian users.

The US site has received rave reviews from American newspapers and TV shows like Newsweek, CNN, Advertising Age, Brandweek, WebWeek, and CBS radio.

Despite positive reviews of the US site, this Canadian version has little new to offer to students.

To begin with, there are too many graphics, so the pages on the site take a long time to load. I spent more time than I would have liked checking out the Entertainment, Culture, and JobSource sections (there is also sports, travel, and technology).

OK, to be fair, the entertainment section wasn't too bad. There were some movie reviews which were (presumably) written by Canadian students, the quality of which I found to be variable. One of them was filled with typos, which was particularly annoying. The TV section had a review of the new CBC sitcom "The Newsroom" but other than that, it didn't seem to have the "latest information about toons, reruns, soaps, talk shows, and prime time happenings" as I had been led to expect in the news release.

There was also an area called Voyeur, in which one of the features was V-Dorm, a "virtual" rip-off of MTV's "Real World" concept. The TV show was bad enough, but if you want to spend eons downloading special "spying" software, you can peek into the dorm rooms of seven co-eds.

I don't know who actually wastes their time doing this, but I do know that I would be very scared to meet them.

As for the Culture section, all of the articles looked pretty pompous and irrelevant. The Fashion section, which purports to "keep track of changing and developing fashion trends" was awful, consisting of one lame "beauty tip" and a few pictures of new hairstyles from Canadian stylists. For entertainment and culture, I would be much more inclined to pick up a magazine for the same (and in most cases, better) information. It would also be a lot faster to flip through a magazine than to get this site up and then wait for all of the pages to load.

I looked at the JobSource page, which was just a small link at the bottom of the Canadian home page. What a waste of time — the information was all American, and was quite paltry even from a US student's point of view. There was only one Canadian link, on the internships page, to Western's journalism program internships. These seemed to be restricted to students in the program, so including that link on this page was useless.

In case you don't trust my opinion, I also ventured into a computer lab on campus to find out what some other Dal students thought about the site.

Paul Reid, a fourth year commerce student and closet computer nerd, looked at the Sports and Technology section and was unequivocally negative about what he saw: "This site offers nothing out of the ordinary. Try pathfinder.com instead — it is the Time/Warner site and has online versions of all of their magazines: Time, Fortune, Sports Illustrated, Entertainment Weekly and more."

Deron O'Reilly, another fourth year commerce student who surfs the net occasionally, checked out the Sports and Culture sections. He said the site is "fairly interesting and well designed, but not particularly informative. I wouldn't bother looking at it in the future."

Lastly, Marie Morrison, a third year biochemistry student who looked at the Entertainment section, had this to say: "I never use the internet and this site doesn't entice me to start. It was boring and tries too hard to be "hip" in order to appeal to students."

So there you have it. If you still want to check it out for yourself, the URL is canada.taponline.com. The US t@p is at www.taponline.com.

freedom

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sink or swim — that's what freedom of speech is for.

When we try to take away people's right to say the things we don't want to hear, several things happen. For one thing, we inflame and excite people's passions even further towards the point of view we are trying to suppress by giving it the mystique and glamour of being outlawed. We also, as I mentioned earlier, remove ourselves from the moral high ground by joining, albeit on a smaller scale, the great censors

of history such as the inquisitor communists, Nazis and others. You can't hide your actions from the highest court of all — the court of historical judgement. If we fall into the paradox of not tolerating the intolerant we will ourselves one day be known as that which we most despise — repressive. Finally, when a society gets too free and easy with its censorship, it winds up suppressing the Galileos and the Vaclav Havels of this world far more successfully than the Ernst Zundels.

We have to face the facts: If this is supposed to be a democracy, everyone must have their say.

Has Bill Gates gone Microsoft in the head?

BY DANIEL CLARK

I have nothing but respect for the President and co-founder of Microsoft. His company has revolutionized the computer industry, and has helped to put a computer on virtually every desktop. Having said that, I think Bill Gates' declaration of war on Netscape is not only bad for Microsoft, but bad for the computer world in general. His recent megalomaniacal attitudes are ultimately self-destructive.

Gates has put almost his entire development team on the task of improving Microsoft's Internet Explorer. His marketing machine is pushing Explorer on both the Internet and on the more conventional media as well. Rather than try to improve the considerable deficiencies of Windows 95 he is working on his own computer Reich. There are several commercial sites (MSNBC, and www.riddler.com) that have sections which are for Internet Explorer 3.0 only. The only way to get IE3 is to download it free from Microsoft...if you have Windows 95.

Within the free exchange of information which the Internet

represents (like the Gazette: *Online* at <http://is2.dal.ca/~gazette/home.html>) Gates has created a Windows 95-only club. What makes this outrage even worse is the fact that both Windows 95 and IE3 are inferior products.

Netscape 3.0 is still the best Internet browser available, and it is the only major graphics browser that is free to individuals with no strings attached. This simple fact has not escaped most Internet aficionados as it is still the most popular browser with 68% of the World Wide Web population.

Netscape is also the company that has the most invested in the good of the WWW. They are actively involved in the expansion and improvement of HTML and Java (which allow for more detailed and more user-friendly Web pages). There is a reason why millions of Web pages have the "Download Netscape Now" graphic on them, and it's not because they're being paid.

Bill Gates' obsession with taking over the Internet is having an effect on other aspects of his business. There has not been any new developments in Microsoft Office in more than a year. In that time

Corel's Wordperfect Office Suite has become the fastest growing Office package on the market.

Microsoft is also planning for the release of the sequel to their successful (although not as successful as originally hoped) Windows 95 in six months. The Windows 97 project has reportedly undergone some serious setbacks due to under-staffing.

Gates' plan to link the world with Windows NT hinges on his ability to dominate the Internet with IE3. Unfortunately, a Microsoft network does not appear to be as palatable to the WWW techies. The Internet was born on the idea of free expression.

The problems that Microsoft is encountering were easily foreseeable. Last year the United States congress tried to censure the Internet. Within weeks hundreds of thousands of web sites were either blacked out in protest or were flying ribbons to the same affect.

I will continue using Microsoft Windows 3.1, Netscape 3.0, and Eudora Light (as my email package). Bill Gates...this is my protest to your unethical actions. The Internet is free and open to all.

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