tools of the trade

The **Asus W5Fe** from Asus Technology, Ltd., is the first of several laptops that offer the SideShow feature. SideShow runs on Microsoft's Vista operating system, and it's essentially an external LCD display that can be viewed without booting up the computer. The small display on the laptop cover is actually showing information gathered from the computer by widget-like programs you download into SideShow. The embedded appliance stores the information (contacts, e-mail, images, and so on) in its own flash memory.

Asus
W5Fe
SideShow notebook

To keep the information updated, you can schedule your Asus laptop to wake up and get the most recent e-mail every hour or so. There's a slightly raised plateau in which the SideShow screen is embedded, but it's worth the slight loss to the machine's slim profile when you consider the convenience of not always booting up just to get a phone number or to check new e-mail. It also saves battery life. The SideShow display is 2.8 inches, and the Flash memory is 1GB. The processor is the Intel Core 2 Duo Processor, and the interior screen is a 12.1-inch widescreen.

There's a dual-layer DVD burner, three USB ports, a FireWire port, an ExpressCard slot, and a 4-in-1 media card reader. The W5Fe is available at computer dealers such as TheNerds.net and NewEgg.com.

Maybe the most surprising feature of the new **Palm Centro** smart device is that it retails for under $100. Available with an exclusive agreement from Sprint, the Centro features voice, text, IM (instant messaging), e-mail, Web access, contact and calendar functions, a full-color touch screen, and full keyboard. The same device will let you view videos on YouTube, capture and share pictures, access built-in Google Maps for directions, and keep up with your e-mail. Sprint's Mobile Broadcasting Network includes Sprint TV, Picture Mail, Sprint On Demand, Sprint Mobile eMail, and Sprint IM. There's one-touch speakerphone, conference calling, ignore a call with text messaging, and Bluetooth connectivity. Centro is the first Palm phone to include PocketTunes, and Sprint's Music Manager lets you "sideload" songs from a computer to the

Palm Centro

Centro. The full keyboard makes typing out messages easy, and the Centro keeps all conversations in a chat-style view, like IM, so you can follow the entire conversation on the screen. The Centro is available in onyx black or ruby red. More information about the device and Sprint plan is available at www.palm.com/centro.

The **Casio CW-100** thermal transfer printer for CDs and DVDs will print

The Big Blue Onion ◆ Michael Castelluccio, Editor

■ Recently, *eWeek* celebrated ViolaWWW's 15th birthday with a list of their candidates for the top Web technologies of all time. Viola was an early patriarch/matriarch of our modern Web browsers. It was developed by Pei-Yuan Wei, a student at U.C. Berkeley, and was released in 1992. A very fundamental browser, it could move between pages with a backward and forward button, could bookmark pages, and kept a history of addresses visited. It wasn't much more than a transfer of the hypertext ability of Hypercard, a hypermedia system designed for Apple, to a Windows environment, but it opened a door.

In the 15 years since Viola, the Web has woven its network outward, covering the entire earth. And as you read the list of *eWeek's* top Web technologies, another analogy comes to mind. The technologies of the Web all wrap their cooperating systems around a hypertext core resembling something like a planetary onion with a surface glowing with millions of flashing connections.

The cosmology of the planet combines the gravitational forces of its elemental technologies like hypertext linking, packet-switching transfers, and locked-down addresses with the forces of good, old-fashioned creative destruction to keep the waters all over its surface constantly changing and its layered atmospheres swirling. The general rules

at 300 dpi with the same clarity as the print on this page. It's the perfect solution for the office that smells like a Sharpie every time you have to do a few backups on disc. Auto-loading and auto-turn make it unnecessary to turn the tray manually. You can print in horizontal or vertical layouts. The software included will help you create the layouts. The CW-100 connects to your PC via USB, and it has its own AC

Casio CD printer

adapter. This is a thermal transfer printer, so it isn't appropriate for discs that have a rough surface specially prepared to receive inkjet printing. Dimensions for the vertical alignment are 7.13" × 2.75" × 7.69". It works with Windows 98, ME, 2000, and XP as well as Mac OSX v10.2 or higher. The printer uses ribbons that are available in black and colors. Visit www.casio.com.

Intuit's **Quicken Home & Business 2008** features a number of significant improvements. With the program, you can view all of your accounts in one place and pay your bills online. Two improvements include the ability to update bank and credit card data with one password and a better way to

track and categorize expenses. Home & Business 2008 also has improved the integration with TurboTax. The new My Savings Plan shows a summary of your spending with a comparison to what you planned to spend. You can see the areas where you can either spend more or save more. Flexible spending targets can be set for your regular expenses such as groceries, and you can check your progress toward the target over the course of the month. It enables you to monitor 401(k) and IRA accounts, and there's a new plan for college savings with 529s. You can store statements and checks electronically. You can monitor investments by tracking portfolio performance; find ways to minimize capital gains

taxes; create schedule A, B, and D tax reports; and compare investments to market indexes and mutual funds to MorningStar ratings. New business features include monitoring business profit and loss and the ability to identify and capture all available business tax deductions. You can monitor upcoming bills and unpaid invoices, and there's improved tracking of vehicle mileage and other Schedule C deductions. http://quicken.intuit.com

are written and rewritten on the fly, and conventional wisdom can be the anchor that will slide your enterprise right off the surface.

A while ago we looked at Woot.com, an online retailer that sells a single product one day at a time. A business model based on "one deal a day" would be laughable in what used to be called the bricks and mortar world. But on the planet, the general rule is good tech lives—bad tech falls off—forget about what has worked elsewhere. In fact, you're almost better off shying away from the institutional experts. Early on, Bill Gates declared that the Internet was a fad and that it wouldn't last very long. Look to the kids in places like Stanford—people like Brin and Page—if you want to keep yourself firmly planted. Even so, the American addiction to dynamic change has no better platform than the Web. What you create today can be edited two minutes after you publish/post it.

Top Technologies

In the list of 30 all-time best technologies, the top five include two languages, one browser, a transfer protocol, and a server software program.

Number one and number two are XML and HTML, markup languages that let you translate your text and other content into a form the Web can display and pass around. Also close to the core (fourth listed) is Tim Berners-Lee's HTTP, a transfer protocol that creates the whole connection layer for the World Wide Web. Naturally, a browser has to be in this inner circle, and *eWeek* lists Netscape Navigator in third place because of its importance as the Web's first killer app. And rounding

good tech lives— bad tech falls off

out the top five of the best of the best is what the editors call the most successful open-source product of all time. Apache is the Web server software that runs most websites online today, and though most people know about the Apple OS, Windows, and even the Linux/Unix applications that run their computers, few have seen the feather logo or know the name Apache. These top five hold the center from flying apart.

Because the browser is the most obvious Web application and because the Web wouldn't work without them, the editors list no fewer than eight browsers, some of which have long ago slipped away. The three seen most often today are Firefox (grandson of Netscape Navigator), Internet Explorer, and Opera, the free Norwegian browser that *eWeek* calls "one of the most innovative and cutting-edge Web browsers available." Some of the predecessors mentioned are Mosaic, Viola, Lynx, and Spyglass. The Web browser has evolved as new versions incorporate new technologies, security, graphic ability, and speed. Feature creep has also layered on additional functions.

To write a Web page, you used to just hand-code the text with HTML markup language. The basic design for the page could be managed by marking off areas with tables and/or frames. Then, companies like Macromedia and Microsoft created Web development software that included, along with the code pages, another

layer on which you managed content with graphical tools that did much of the formatting and all of the HTML coding for you. You could shift between code, design, and preview pages and actually create Web content without ever touching or learning HTML. It was there, but it was one layer down.

The Web developer programs mentioned in the list are HotMetal, one of the first WYSIWIG (what-you-see-is-what-you-get) developers, and Dreamweaver, today's standard for professional Web developers, now owned by Adobe. Very popular, but not on the list, is Microsoft's FrontPage, which has evolved into Expression Web. These developers take content preparation from HTML text manipulation to highly styled multimedia page content. Dreamweaver is usually used in conjunction with other Adobe Web products such as Flash (also on the top-tech list) and Fireworks or Photoshop. The HTML code is still the base, but the formatting above it gets pretty sophisticated.

One page developer technology left off the list is CSS (Cascading Style Sheets). This style creation coding lets you create page styles that can be repeated throughout a site's environment. When changes are made to the style sheet, all the instances of that style pick up the changes as they cascade throughout all the pages.

Other technologies on the list cover blogging, RSS (really simple syndication—a way to personally publish), security, Web conferencing, and Web services. Yes, the planet is growing, expanding as new tech is layered on—but it's definitely not slowing down. Maybe not a big blue marble, but it's still a pretty colorful big planetary onion. ■