

tools ^{of the} trade

Novatel's **Wireless Ovation U727** combines two functions in a single USB-connected drive. It offers high-speed wireless data access, and it has flash storage with an integrated microSD slot that will accommodate cards up to 4GB. The card slot is on the side, and the antenna is a flip-up square loop. The U727 runs on Windows Vista, XP, and 2000, Mac OS, and Linux OS. It plugs into a USB port on your laptop and configures itself. It's designed to operate on CDMA supporting EV-DO Rev. A Mobile Broadband service and is backwards compatible to EV-DO Rev. 0 and 1XRTT in areas where Rev. A coverage isn't available. It has a built-in GPS chipset for Sprint Location Services that will let

you plot your current location on a map and then search for nearby points of interest. For security, the Ovation uses a CDMA wireless technology authentication and identification system. The Mobile Identification Number (MIN) and Electronic Serial Number (ESN) make it virtually impossible for others to capture and decode messages. It also works with your laptop's hibernate mode and remains ready to connect once the system wakes up (resumes). It supports auto-connect for faster connection time and intelligent data traffic routing. For more information visit www.sprint.com.

Wacom's new pen tablet, the **Bamboo**, comes in two

forms, the **Bamboo** and the **Bamboo Fun**. Both are made to provide pen-based computing at a reasonable price. The **Fun** model comes with a suite of software for drawing and photo finishing, but we'll look at the basic model. The **Bamboo** lets you jot notes, mark up documents, sign your name, write—not type—your e-mail, and, of course, make drawings and doodles in any program that allows pen input. The device also serves as a sophisticated mouse replacement with the touchpad area plotting the entire monitor, and the pen has a rocker switch with right and left clicks controlled by the side of your thumb. If you've noticed the beginning symptoms of carpal tunnel, it's an intelligent alternative since the grip with which you hold and move a pen is much more natural and less stressful than twisting your wrist flat to shove a mouse around.



Wacom Bamboo Tablet

Additional navigation controls are mounted at the top of the tablet, with four buttons that can be as simple as arrow back and forward or can be configured to handle specific common commands for a variety of programs. The scroll wheel in the center does just that, scrolls. The new Windows Vista program has a number of functions that are essentially pen-based (handwriting recognition, inking, and pen features), and there are other handwriting recognition programs for XP and other OSs if you want to try to, occasionally at least, replace some keyboarding. The **Bamboo** supports widescreen displays, has a



Sprint's Wireless Ovation

A New Year, a New Internet ♦ Michael Castelluccio, Editor

■ The transition to a new Internet has been going on for a while. Web 2.0 has its foundations solidly planted in several weighty footings, including blogs, wikis, mashups, and social networks. The difference between the original 1.0 and 2.0 is fairly simple. Web 1.0 was built on traditional publishing memes—the idea was to push information to a relatively passive audience. Web 2.0, on the other hand, is collaborative, and it depends on user-created content.

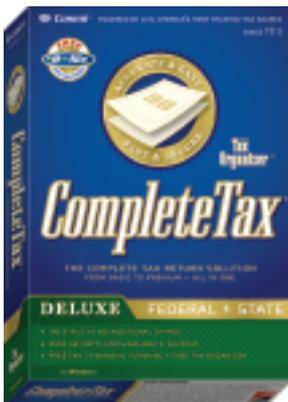
Examples from each make the differences apparent.

Think of what's published in the now-establishment ezine Slate and on a site like MySpace. In one, you have content pushed by a professional editorial staff, and the other has a virtual community offering biography with social networking as a final goal. Even the hardware reflects the differences—1.0 is a client-server universe, and 2.0 is peer-to-peer.

What's a Wiki?

This month we'll look at wikis and how they are being

continued on next page



textured work surface for a natural feel, high-resolution and report rate, and the pen doesn't need batteries. www.wacom.com

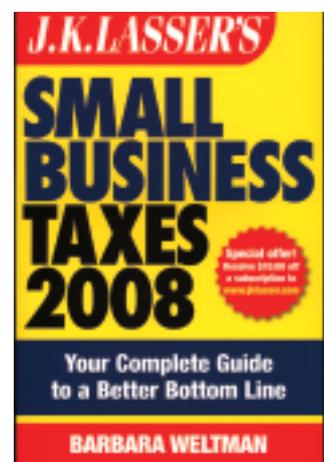
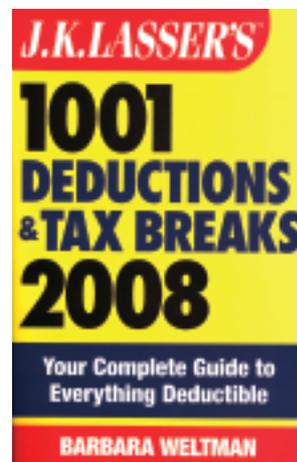
Cosmi CompleteTax is a do-it-yourself tax preparation package that's inexpensive (\$29.95) yet complete. It includes federal and state tax forms, a new "Tax Organizer" checklist program that helps you assemble documents to maximize deductions, free E-filing, and free antispyware. The tax package is the result of collabo-

ration between Cosmi Corporation and accounting law software and services giant CCH. Features include an easy interview process that helps automate the return and automatic double checks for mistakes and oversights with a direct link to potential problems. Returns can be E-filed or printed on plain paper; federal forms 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ, and schedules are included; and there's quick access to IRS publications, guidance to maximize itemized deductions, and tools for Schedule C filers and investors. One federal E-File and one state E-File are included with the price of the package. www.CosmiCompleteTax.com

J.K. Lasser has two chunky tax guidebooks that you might want to have on your desk as

you're going through this year's April agonies. The *1001 Deductions & Tax Breaks* is subtitled *Your Complete Guide to Everything Deductible*. The 400-plus pages break the hints down by category, including you and your family, your home and car, your investments and retirement saving, medical and dental, and so on. There's even an online supplement to the book that updates tax law changes

to keep the information absolutely current. *The Small Business Taxes 2008* is an even bigger book, 550 pages, and the index is more granular, with 30 separate items arranged in four general categories: Organization, Business Income and Losses, Business Deductions and Credits, and Tax Planning for your small business. Visit www.jklasser.com for additional information and chapter excerpts. ■



continued from p. 59

used in corporate environments. We'll cover blogs and mashups in a future issue.

A wiki, according to the guy who invented them, is "the simplest online database that could possibly work." Ward Cunningham launched his first wiki in 1995, and the format has been widely adopted since by academics, artists, hackers, and business professionals. The most famous wiki is Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia. Like other wikis, Wikipedia has an open editing system where the readers are the contributing editors and proofreaders. The readers write the articles.

Another famous wiki is the community that has produced one of the most revolutionary pieces of software of our age, the Linux operating system. Because of their complexity, operating systems are tough to develop and test, and they require a large community of planners and programmers. Linux has a dedicated, worldwide network, and anyone can work on the project.

One of the problems with defining wikis is that the word, which actually means "quick" in Hawaiian, can refer to the software, the community, or the database. The community can be seen, and operated, as an intranet or a common workspace for collaborators. The reality is a little amorphous, so why not go to the wiki (Wikipedia) for their take on it—they should know.

Wikipedia editors say, "A wiki is a type of computer software that allows users to easily create, edit, and link web pages. Wikis are often used to create collaborative websites, power community websites, and are increasingly being installed by businesses to provide affordable

and effective intranets or for use in knowledge management."

The database that Ward Cunningham talked about when he created his first wiki is a Web page or collection of pages, and it is reached by collaborators through their browsers. The syntax is simple text rather than HTML or some other markup or programming language. You write in English on a wiki, not in code, and your edits are made out there on the network.

Wikis can look like blogs, but a blog is a catalog of readers' comments listed usually in chronological order for each topic. You can write them and read them, but you don't proof or delete them. On a wiki, permissions are usually granted to a list of approved collaborators or to anyone who wants to help out. You can write an article for Wikipedia that addresses something about which you have useful knowledge. Feel really ambitious? On the Project Gutenberg's wiki, you can edit an entire book for a worldwide audience of the 20,000-volume free library, as long as it's out of copyright.

Writing in a recent issue of *eWeek*, Dave Greenfield explained why wikis have caught on in schools and corporations. "Wikis' flexibility and versatility make the technology a potential solution for an array of business requirements. From bare-bones content collaborations to Web-based project management, wikis can adapt to the team requirements of many organizations." With its ability to combine information from numerous data sources, it can even function as a "dashboard into information sources."

Greenfield describes the use of wikis in universities with an example from Boston College. There, in the Gerald School of Information Manage-

ment, associate professor Gerald Kane uses a wiki running Socialtext to allow students to "post ideas and essays and even to suggest questions for exams." At wiki-friendly IBM, there are now more than 15,000 wikis used by almost a quarter-million associates. You can get an overview of Big Blue's use of these at the IBM Wiki Site at www-941.ibm.com/collaboration/wiki/dashboard.action.

There are a number of free wiki tools to get you started on your own collaboration. You can get these at www.editme.com, www.seedwiki.com, and www.swiki.net.

There are wiki services that will let you brand their pages, and they will give you simple editing that works in a WYSIWIG format (What You See Is What You Get) along with permission controls. Among these are www.BrainKeeper.com, SamePage ([www.etch.net/home/](http://www.etouch.net/home/)), www.SocialText.com, and www.Wetpaint.com. Several offer a free version of the wiki, and most of the sites have demos or guided tours along with basic explanations about using the technology.

Finally, there are the wiki services that you install on your own computers and those that IT can develop for corporate use. TikiWiki is one of the better known programs that you download and configure on your networks. It's called a Groupware/CMS (Content Management System) solution. With Tiki you get wikis (like Mediawiki), forums (like phpBB), blogs (like WordPress), articles (like Digg), image gallery (like Flickr), map server (like Google Maps), link directory (like DMOZ), and translation and i18n (like Babel Fish). But you set it up and administer it. Click on the Learn More button on the home page (<http://info.tikiwiki.org>) for demos and general information. ■