TOOLS of the TRADE

Philips Pocket Memo 9500

The Pocket Memo is small and lightweight, measuring 2" × 4.6" × 0.7". It has a full metal case but weighs only 3.7 ounces. The four-position slide switch gives you immediate, no-look control over the four basic functions: record, stop, play, and fast wind. Powered by two rechargeable AAA batteries, recording time on the Secure Digital/Multimedia Card can range from 44-65 hours with a 256MB card or an amazing 349-523 hours on a 2GB card. The batteries provide 17 hours of power—alkalines will give you 15 hours. The excellent audio quality is maintained on the compressed DSS file format, the international standard for professional speech recording. Two recording modes offer a Standard Play or Long Play mode. The large display screen is backlit, and there are two smart buttons for scrolling file management. Playback is through headphones or front

speaker, and there's a docking station to import dictation into documents on your PC. SpeechExec Pro Dictate is the program included with the system that facilitates transcriptions and interfaces with other speech recognition software. The SpeechExec Software has a file encryption option for e-mailing or storing sensitive files. www.philips.com/dictation

Logitech diNovo™ Media Desktop®

The Media Desktop will not only get the wires off your desk, but it will replace the electronics clutter with a sleek, award-winning keyboard/MediaPad/rechargeable mouse set of peripherals. All three devices send their inputs to your desktop via a small Bluetooth® wireless receiver that plugs into a USB port. The three parts of the system also double as auxil-

iaries for your laptop if you find typing on the tight, rectangular layout embedded on your portable uncomfortable or limiting. The separate number pad could get you off the top row of numbers and back to a single-hand touch system. All parts of the diNovo Desktop are made to travel. The ultra-flat keyboard is full-size and has the full vertical travel distances of standard desktop keys. The strokes are quiet, and there are three hot keys for Internet, Mail, and Search as well as media controls for audio and video and enhanced F keys for one-touch access for a number of useful functions. The numeric pad has a thermometer and time-and-date display and can be placed to the left of the keyboard for southpaws. It's called a MediaPad because it functions as a customizable remote control for PC images, video, music, and web-

sites and has a three-line LCD readout. The cordless mouse uses a laser, and the scroll wheel tilts left and right for side scrolling and zooming. It recharges in a cradle when not in use. www.logitech.com

ZAGG Invisible SHIELD™

ZAGG has a clear protective covering for your cell phone, iPod, camera, PDA, laptop, whatever—there are more than 2,000 customized versions for all kinds of electronics. What makes the InvisibleSHIELD different is that it's made of a military grade material—the kind of stuff that was originally designed to cover and protect helicopter blades. The online demo shows the difference when a key is raked across the back of an iPod first without, and then with a SHIELD in place. The scarred back of the uncovered player is kind of unnerving, especially when you think how often these devices share pocket space with keys and change or pens. The coverings are available for just the screen or for the entire body of the device, with all the ports and buttons left uncovered and

Jailbreaking Your Phone

By Michael Castelluccio, Editor

THE PROPRIETARY WARS CONTINUE.

Maybe it was instilled into the very genetics of computing when, early on, almost all computing was leased to users. You could own the results—the data—but the process remained in the iron boxes that you were just renting. Even with the personal computer you bought and owned, there was still no escape from the intellectual serfdom. The corporations that owned the instruction sets for your computer (the software) only let you use their instructions.

A quick check of Webopedia.com provides the following legal parameters: "Though you may have paid for the software, what you have actually done is licensed the application, essentially paying for the rights to use the software according to guidelines determined by the owner. When a user either purchases software or freely downloads software from the Internet, the user is not buying the ownership rights to the software but a license to use the software according to the licensing agreement, or EULA (for End User Licensing Agreement)." The EULA is that long, scrolling agreement that you are asked to check "Agree" or "Don't Agree" when you load the program on your machine. Not much of choice really. Say no, and the company will prevent you from using the software with no guarantee of returning your money.

Run a DNA check on the EULA, and you can trace it directly back to the gene pairings that blinked the lights on the big iron of IBM's and NCR's early rental machines. Today, WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization), a special agency of the United Nations, has a legal definition of computer programs that claims they deserve the same protection "as literary works within the meaning of Article 2 of the Berne Convention. [And] such protection applies to computer programs, whatever may be the mode or form of their expression."

Of course, there are legal issues that are still unre-

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accessible. To install an Invisible-SHIELD, there's more preparation than the usual peel-and-place with lesser screen shields. The InvisibleSHIELD is sprayed with a solution, placed, and then a squeegee is used to press out the air bubbles. There are a number of very good videos at the website that show how to do it with a couple of different devices. www.zagg.com

Belkin Clamp-On Surge Protector

It might not happen often, but when you find yourself under your desk, fumbling around in the rat's nest surrounding your power strip and looking for a spare outlet or a way to turn off your locked up PC, even once can be too much. Belkin has a logical, convenient solution that clamps onto the edge of your desktop. Its Clamp-On Surge Protector lets you reach your outlets and keep an eye on the surge (green) and fault-ground (red) indicator lights. The strip grounds AC power through six surge-protected outlets (four regular and two BlockSpace for chargers with large "bricks" at the plug-end). The power cord is 10 feet long. The surge protector has a response time of less than one nanosecond, and the strip comes with a $15,000 connected-equipment guarantee. There are three different styles, so you might want to get one for the video rack that you use for presentations. Belkin's Web page for the Clamp-Ons is www.belkin.com/surgeprotection/clamp-on.
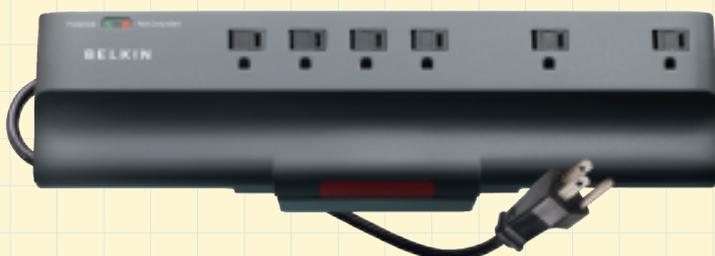
solved concerning software rights. For starters, is it fair, or even legal, that with shrink-wrapped EULAs (the ones inside the box with the software), you're required to buy the product before you can see the terms of the agreement?

THE COMPANY STORE

Recently, the distant sound of heads knocking has been heard coming from an emerging corner of the computing market. The amazing success of Apple's iPhone has opened a new front in the proprietary wars.

When Steve Jobs premiered the iPhone, he repeated himself a number of times insisting it was a computer, not just a phone. But there was an unpleasant surprise for those who took home the first iPhones. The iPhone certainly is a computer, but it's a locked computer. To load new apps, you had to go back to the company store.

At first, with a blizzard of new applications being offered, not too many seemed to mind—especially not Apple shareholders. The company was getting a 30% commission from the developers selling their iPhone apps on the company site. And customers had the choice of thousands of programs at the App Store, with some as cheap as $0.99.

But problems arose. Apple was deciding what was appropriate to sell, and certain programs were excluded as inappropriate. The company had decided to "protect the user experience" through censorship.

Perhaps the biggest miscalculation was the basic one— the assumption by the corporation that this is not only a computer, it's *their* computer. Jobs, who years ago began his work in a garage, seems to have forgotten that geeks prefer Jolt to Kool-Aid. It wasn't very long before the lock was cracked, and you could find the hack online that would allow you to install unofficial apps on your iPhone or iTouch. Google the phrase "Apple jailbreak," and you'll find quite a number of places where you can get step-by-step instructions to unlock even your iPhone 3G. The name for the hack, jailbreaking, speaks volumes about the psychological motivation of the hackers.

But Apple now has an even larger problem if they choose to keep knocking heads with their customers. Several "unofficial" App Stores are opening online where you can buy the iPhone programs Apple won't offer in its store or that developers have decided to sell elsewhere.

One of the programs that the App Store won't carry is a program that enables the iPhone to work as a camcorder. It's called Cycorder, and the developer, Jay Freeman (yes, that's really his name), has just opened the Cydia Store that sells applications for unlocked iPhones.

Not surprisingly, Apple claims that jailbreaking one of their iPhones violates copyright law. It has been reported that they have sold more than 500 million apps in the App Store, so they would like to hold onto the exclusive right to the iPhone apps market. On the other hand, a recent *The Wall Street Journal* article reports, "[The jailbreaking] software [Freeman] created to modify the iPhone has been installed on about 1.7 million iPhones."

Over the first weekend in March, Freeman opened the Cydia Store (www.cydia.com). The name is based on the Cydia application that is added to your iPhone when you unlock it with the jailbreaking program. The store represents a very modest beginning with only one product on the shelves the first week, Freeman's Cyntact, a contact management app that currently sells for $1. The 27-year-old doctoral student expects the inventory list to grow rapidly in the next few months. As though just waiting, the image of the iPhone on the Cydia Store home page today rests on its side with a blank blue screen—no icons at all.

SHOWDOWN

Freeman is anticipating a response from Apple, but he doesn't know what form it will take. He told *The Wall Street Journal* that he has an attorney lined up in case the response is legal action. In the same *Journal* article, reporter Yukari Kane speculated on Freeman's chances in a showdown. Kane points out, "Aaron Perzanowski, a professor specializing in digital copyright law at the University of California Berkeley School of Law, believes developers have 'a pretty good' defense under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act if Apple claims what they're doing is illegal, though it's largely uncharted legal territory."

The issue, if it comes before a bench, will be the jailbreaking. Freeman isn't selling pirated applications. He says he's just offering an alternative market. Some call his offerings "graymarket" goods, but he has set up the same arrangement with developers that Apple has at its App Store. It could all come back to the simple question: Is that your phone ringing? Or is it Apple's?" **SF**

> **The name for the hack, jailbreaking, speaks volumes about the psychological motivation of the hackers.**