

they actually wanted the ads. It's a sign of the maturation of the Internet," he said. Zip subscribers now have to

prevent it. And what about "framing"? Is it legal for a Web site to use frames to promote someone

against *Sheldan News* on the traditional grounds of misleading and deceptive conduct. An even more recent issue is

Webmasters have quickly realised that as well as using their own product names as key words to bring users to their site,

deceptive com to see how su attacked." Baker &

Electronic wallet tackles battle of the pocket bulge

FUTURES
By SUE LOWE

A MONG the many futuristic prototypes in IBM's development labs is an electronic wallet that will remember information submitted from any magnetic-stripe card or smart card, and can generate that card, on demand, when needed. The original cards can be discarded.

This one-card-does-all device is an attempt at solving the very real-world problem of wallet-bulge. And that's a problem that will quickly get worse if non-interoperable smart cards take off. The prototype wallet has been

invented and was being touted around the recent IBM Fair, in Japan, by Ted Selker, an expert in man-machine interface design. Selker is a fellow at IBM's Research Lab in San Jose, California, and is on a year's sabbatical with the Media Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Before IBM he was at Xerox PARC.

Selker gains most of his credibility as the brain behind the Trackpoint pointing device in IBM's ThinkPad notebooks. He claims that editing with a Trackpoint is 20 per cent more effective than using other notebook pointers.

He is still working on the Trackpoint device, looking at forced feedback — the small red

button would push back against the finger when, for example, the mouse hit an icon or the edge of a Window on the screen. He is also toying with a camera sensitive enough to monitor the viewer's pupils, prompting maybe a PC, or some as-yet unknown device, to react to the user's obvious interest in an object on screen.

Body movement would play a key role in the electronic wallet, too. Using a slightly different action to withdraw a Medicare card or a loyalty card would give the wallet the cue to lay different information on the card.

The prototype wallet also incorporates a business card scanner, a mobile phone, a scheduler and the right or left side

of a thin-film qwerty keyboard. Selker says the most common error in typing confuses right- and left-hand keying. Typing with just the one hand on half a qwerty keyboard could use a single "shift"-style key to generate the functions of the other keys.

He says IBM Research Lab evaluations suggest typists using the half-keyboard would never reach the speeds of a full keyboard, but that performance would be "more than reasonable". He believes it would be a fair compromise for the benefits of the small-size, one-handed operation.

It sounds far-fetched, but Selker says all of the technology exists to do it.

US dash for dots

THE Clinton Administration expects to approve tomorrow an industry-led compromise that will set up an independent non-profit organisation to oversee domain name allocation, the president's Internet adviser, Ira Magaziner, said.

Magaziner asked the Internet community in June to create a new body to administer so-called domain names by September 30.

While not all the details are complete, "there's now close" to

Search warrants

ONE of the most basic "rules" of Web site construction insists that pages should give users a way to search interactively for content.

And it's a sound rule: even visitors with the commitment to look through an 80-item table of contents can be excused for missing some item that would fit their needs. A typical search facility lets users enter terms and receive a list of pages where those terms appear.

Small sites considering such a move may find they're facing a

WEB MECHANIC

By DAVID WALKER

querying a database, say, or connecting to another server program. As the last step, the script creates a page in HTML and passes the new page back to the browser. All of this takes place in the twinkling of an eye.

If you're looking for CGI scripts, the first place you'll go is Matt's Script Archive at www.worldwidemart.com/scripts/, home of Matt Wright and other free scripts. Among the

sophisticated AltaVista-style search which will check meta tags, the free Xavatoria from Fluid Dynamics (at www.xav.com/scripts/xavatoria) has attracted favourable comment. The CGI Resource Index (www.cgi-resources.com) also provides scripts.

Maybe you can part with a little cash. For \$US35 (\$60) a year, www.weboys.net will index your site. Or you can buy cgi-bin space: the people who run Matt Wright's server at WorldWide Mart (www.worldwidemart.com) will do the job for \$US7 a month.

Move to

VIRTUAL REALITY
By JOHN MARKOFF

TWO prominent Internet pioneers have set about creating something close to *The Matrix* — a 3D World Wide Web foreseen by science fiction author William Gibson.

Carl Malamud and Marshall Rose, who helped create the technologies behind e-mail and Net broadcasting, have founded a company called Invisible Worlds, to create a way of mapping the Internet's servers and data in 3D.

The idea underlying the new company is that the current generation of Internet navigation tools — portals, search engines and directories — make it difficult for users to visualise dimensions of cyberspace, the

virtual uni resulted from the Internet a "We think

to take your and drive arou Malamud says reasons the chaotic is the it visually."

Though the number of words and dards such a Modelling La Malamud satte commercial e tools to map

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Inside the system

SYSADS.COM is a site aimed at those new to the system administration game and those with a bit of experience. For the former group there's a series of tutorials and quick references, while the latter are catered for with "extensive technical discussions", covering such topics as Bourne Shell Scripts and Gnucensus. The resource is a mix of on-site information and links to external sites.

www.sysads.com

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